Domestic Devotions in the Early Modern World

Intersections

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN EARLY MODERN CULTURE

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Domestic Devotions in the Early Modern World

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She is currently affiliated with the Radboud Universiteit where she works on Kunera, a searchable online database of medieval badges and ampullae, and on the fourth volume of *Heilig en Profaan* on badge finds in the Netherlands and Belgium. Her next project is an arthistorical research of natural disasters, especially in the Low Countries from the St Elisabeth flood (1421) onwards.

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Introduction

Marco Faini and Alessia Meneghin

In recent decades, a wealth of publications has examined the role of religion in early modern society, culture and politics. This includes pioneering work on the importance of lay piety to civic identity in the Renaissance period.[1] Many more studies have focused on the upheavals associated with the Protestant and Catholic Reformations, and in the last thirty years historians of Protestant Europe have expanded their focus to include the family and the home within studies of religious change.[2] However, the focus on the intimate and meditative nature of Lutheranism, Calvinism and Anglicanism, has tended to distract historians from gaining a proper understanding of those cultural formations that were simultaneously also present in Catholic homes. The same historiographical tradition, emerging from Reformation studies, has been even slower to forge comparisons with regions outside Europe and faiths beyond Christianity. Given the vast array of religious beliefs and practices throughout the early modern world and bearing in mind their distinct patterns of historical evolution, it is evident that a one-size-fits-all model of comparison will not serve to explain what domestic – or private – piety is. We are equally conscious that the use of a European periodization in a global perspective is not unproblematic. However, we are emboldened by the fact that historians of East Asia have recognized the value of adopting terms and appropriating concepts from the western historiographical tradition. For example, Craig Clunas has experimented with the idea of a Burckhardtian Renaissance in relation to Ming China, while Kai-Wing Chow argues forcibly for the relevance of 'early modern' in his study of print culture in China.[3]

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1 See the seminal work of Trexler R.C., *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca, NY: 1991).

2 Forster M.R. – Kaplan B.J. (eds.), *Piety and Family in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of Steven Ozment* (London: 2005); Doran J. – Methuen C. – Walsham A. (eds.), *Religion and the Household* (Woodbridge, Suffolk – Rochester, NY: 2014).

3 In his *Empire of Great Brightness: Visual and Material Culture of Ming China, 1368–1644* (London: 2008) 7–20, Craig Clunas uses the argument of 'taste' – as expressed by Jacob Burckhardt in his analysis of Renaissance civilization – about Ming Dynasty China, suggesting a parallelism to early modern Europe, seeing both eras as witnessing 'the invention of taste'. For example in the case of tea culture, a highly sophisticated sense of good taste came long before the Ming; on this see Clunas C., *Superfluous Things: Material Culture and Social Status in Early Modern China* (Cambridge: 1991) 171. In a similar vein, Kai-Wing Chow's book, *Publishing, Culture and Power in Early Modern China* (Redwood City, CA: 2004), invites the reader to refrain from concentrating exclusively on the crucial role that the press held

This volume examines domestic devotions from a global perspective from 1400 to 1800, focusing on a range of faiths and places around the world. We think that a global outlook on religion is made necessary by recent discussions of the very idea of religion (what makes religion a universal category? How has monotheism – especially Christian monotheism – affected our ideas of what devotion is?). The anthropologist Ugo Fabietti has recently explored what he calls the 'materiality of religions'. His analysis investigates the common functions of objects, images, bodies and substances across faiths.[4] Analogously, Alexei Lidov has reflected on sacred space, what he defines hierotopy, that is, the set of conditions that make possible contact with the transcendent (or what he defines, in Mircea Eliade's term, 'hierophany').[5] What are the conditions that make this contact possible within the household? Why do we feel the need to differentiate between domestic devotions and public performances of devotional practices? This volume addresses these fundamental questions from an ambitious transcultural perspective, moving away from a merely European dimension. We have chosen to embrace a global view which is intrinsically more inclusive from an intellectual point of view, while also allowing us to address a much wider range of questions in many fields of knowledge. It is an obvious intention and purpose of this volume to carry out a serious examination of those perspectives that attempt to penetrate the concept of 'religious devotion' in a 'domestic' setting within global history. Our sense of global history implies that we are interested in understanding human actions and reactions, rituals and behaviours in the religious devotional realm in the medium and long term. The presence and development of 'domesticated' rituals (i.e. practised in the tranquillity of one's home, to be understood here as the place where one lived, as we will see) that can be referred to under the name of 'devotions' within human communities across the world is the main subject of our inquiry. Global history, as a reality and not just a historiographical category, is something that implies recognizing universal human traits even in the practices of religion and ritual, at least at some levels, while, however, simultaneously negotiating and maintaining identities and social relationships

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    in Europe, for example, in disseminating new scientific ideas and in acting as a vehicle for religious propaganda. In fact, as the author argues, the invention and consequent dissemination of the printing press in both Europe and China may function as a key to the creation of legitimate parallelisms in the use of the term 'early modern', applied to both geographic areas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, "Introduction" 1–18.

4 Fabietti U., *Materia sacra. Corpi, oggetti, immagini, feticci nella pratica religiosa* (Milan: 2014).

5 Lidov A., "Creating the Sacred Space: Hierotopy as a New Field of Cultural History", in Carnevali L. – Cremonesi C. (eds.), *Spazi e percorsi sacri. I santuari, le vie, i corpi* (Padua: 2014) 61–89.

at an individual and a collective level, thus ensuring the continuation of human and cultural diversity.

One of the advantages of a global perspective is that events, habits or phenomena that were once thought to be unique to a given area, and therefore disconnected from each other, turn out to be not just 'local' matters. Rather, they are, at least to an extent, a product of people and regions that are part of larger networks. In other words, 'things' occur locally, but are not determined necessarily or solely as a result of local influences or factors. On the other hand, local changes can effectively alter the nature of wider networks. In order to develop an improved appreciation for how religions have been connected in the past, we need to be able to better evaluate intensified connections among them in the light of devotional rituals forever present in human contexts, such as the necessity to advocate for the sacred. On the other hand, things are naturally more complicated and require a stronger theoretical effort than simply developing local histories and putting them in connection/ comparison with other local histories taking place somewhere else in the world. How should we proceed then? What and where should we emphasize? Are there recurring problems/processes/rituals/habits that permit generalization? Or is everything that has happened in a given place unlike anything that has happened elsewhere? It can be argued that there are deeply embedded patterns in the way humans approach the sacred, but at the same time one cannot deny the existence of mentalities and habits that present even greater differences than those that we can analyse here. From our point of view therefore, it is not crucial to argue that there is a strict separation between the European and extra-European modes and ways of religious and devotional activities, both analytically and historically, but rather that they inform one another theoretically and empirically. In this sense, the search for patterns or patterned processes of typical individual religious experiences of devotion in global history is part of the intellectual preparation needed for better understanding a 'global history of devotion'. This should be considered a set of processes not necessarily or not entirely separated from each other, although of course different one from another. The essays contained in this book illustrate instances of 'global histories of devotion' in the past: the study of these histories casts further light upon processes of cultural and religious parallelism, for they bear similarities that legitimately call for comparison. For these reasons, as we shall see below, we have chosen to combine a comparative and a connective approach.

Naturally, putting together experiences and narratives that are so different from each other raises a few questions. What are our aims or intentions in trying to link these disparate facts and circumstances closely together? For

whom or for what is this type of research intended? Different authors dealing with different subjects in different areas and time periods take, obviously, different methodological and intellectual positions on these issues. One may argue that we seek to establish positive knowledge about facts, structures and outcomes of these case studies. In fact, this book is a sort of 'mapping exercise' through which a cumulative body of knowledge can be established. In this sense, a positive knowledge about the past is in itself valuable, as it is the attempt to comprehend the spiritual needs of people of the past, and how these needs intersected to shape people's daily devotions in areas as distant as those portrayed by the essays of this volume. The purpose of *Domestic Devotions in the Early Modern World*, therefore, is to illustrate the diverse and heterogeneous ways of practising one's devotion and to demonstrate how different methodological and intellectual approaches, if used in accordance with historical analysis, can help to reinterpret the past.

Important to our approach is the definition of religion in the way Richard Trexler imagined it, namely a 'system of reverential behaviour' rather than a community of beliefs as it has come to be understood in the post-Reformation world.[6] To make his case, Trexler had to define the word 'ritual'; he defined it as verbal and bodily actions that become relatively fixed in the contexts of specific spaces and times. Can the practice of religious devotion be regarded as also being a ritual? Yes, to a certain extent, as it too followed a pre-ordained path. Not always, however, would religious behaviour follow a rational path, nor a predictable one. The power of religious images, the gestures of piety, the spiritual cravings of the weak and displaced, and the rituals that embraced these manifestations of religion, all shaped the intimate, spiritual experience of the devotee. The individual and intimate emotions generated by these rituals cannot, as a consequence, be foreseen; they are often upheld by impulsive, or even volatile spiritual moods that are not subjected to social rule. Furthermore, what mattered the most to the people practising their devotions was not the religion of intellectuals, of theologians, and of the prelates of the Church or formalized institutions, but everyday religion, the miracle-working images, the street processions: no matter how governments and churches try to control them, populations will create their own religious reality in the public life of the streets and, all the more, in the intimacy of their homes.

It becomes clear that to write about rituals and people, and rituals and devotion implies therefore a certain confidence in telling stories. But if we write about religious experiences and devotions in the past – that we know were rather unprompted and unconstrained – we ought to consider the natural and

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6   Trexler R.C., *Religion in Social Context in Europe and America, 1200–1700* (Tempe, AR: 2002).

free domestic environment within which these devotions would take place. Therefore, we cannot avoid addressing issues such as the 'home' (what do we call 'home' in a time span of more than 400 years and in a global context?), 'household' (is 'household' to be considered as synonym for 'home' or rather, for 'family'?), 'identity', and even the social space and social roles (within the urban context) where an individual's identity was usually fully explored and put into practice. If the place of every individual in society is shaped by the presence of these crucial factors combined together, and if these factors influence and ultimately shape the interaction of the individual with all socially expressed rituals, such as those performed in religious devotion, then, in the light of this narrative, we should seek to understand them better.

First of all, is the concept of 'domestic' something that can find its exhaustive explanation in the debate of 'private' versus 'public'? Did there exist a clearly defined and definable space that can be called 'private', in which intimate activities such as praying, or meditating, were to take place? If we look back to the medieval city, we realize that religion was in tune with the urban architecture and the urban layout: everything had to serve God, even civic architecture. Still in the fifteenth century cities testified to this pursuit of urban and 'religious' harmony through a design in which the collective spaces that hosted the ceremonies and festivities each year, through the exposure of sacred images for instance, contributed to renewing the collective representation of the city itself. The medieval city thus appeared as a place where individuals were not 'self-sufficient', but rather sort of captives of a specific social role. In this context privacy much depended on one's social status: the higher this was the more likely one was to enjoy some intimacy. This – in a society like that of the medieval city, made up predominantly of masses of poor and lower status people, and where it was the Church who exerted a strong control over public life – explains why collective spaces were prevalent, outside, as well as within houses. Conversely, the space of the Renaissance city was the product of a territoriality based primarily on concepts of reciprocity and redistribution, a world in which the market, civil life, and even religious sentiments and rituals were often subordinated to the political order, which exerted a strong influence over citizens but let them, to an extent, reappropriate their individual experiences and spaces.[7]

If one turns one's eyes further afield and to a later time period, to extra-European cities, for instance those in South America, one can see how until the end of the eighteenth century, with the founding of hundreds of these new cities, processes of evangelization were in act through the construction

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7   Sack R.D., *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (Cambridge, MA: 1986) 114–124.

of ideal urban models based once again on religious order, where little was left as private: most of the city's spaces were in fact conceived as public. The city of the New World was thus, in essence, replicating a town which was halfway between a medieval and a Renaissance town where public space was always characterized by the presence of an imposing church (or cathedral); where social life and religious practices were largely carried out in missionary churches and 'colonial' houses, but dominated by public spaces, which were closed areas but opened on large *patios*, onto which the houses faced.[8] In this context privacy was rarely achievable. It must not be forgotten that colonization meant primarily evangelization: attempts to build the ideal city were governed by the idea that the staunchest Catholic values must be represented. To effect these social programs, the authorities often employed the help of the Society of Jesus. From the end of the sixteenth century – in the forefront of the Counter-Reformation program – the Jesuits had the task of evangelizing the Spanish overseas territories (especially Mexico and Central and South America), but missions were also active in Japan, China, and the East Indies.[9]

If we turn to the Middle East and try to understand what lies behind the concept of 'privacy' there, we realize that there was a higher and stricter degree of division (and certainly less porosity) between environments considered 'private' and those deemed 'public'. Considerations of high respect for the privacy of subjects had their roots deep in the past, and with the advent of the Ottomans to power, the relationship between ruler and subjects was not altered: in this, Ottoman law differed radically from contemporary European law, which was more invasive with regard to privacy. A general division between public and private was commonly held and understood, also on the basis of socioeconomic factors, familial and intrafamilial relationships, residential and social status, life experiences and so on; all these factors came together to shape the way privacy was conceived in people's minds. For example, subjects knew that as long as they kept to their private area they were protected from the intervention of state agents even if they committed crimes (in fact, if a crime was committed, it was the neighbourhood who was invested with the task of handing the culprit to the Ottoman agents, not the latter, who

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8   Mumford L., *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (New York: 1961) 48–49.

9   Durán D., *Historia de la Indias de Nueva España e islas de la Tierra Firme*, ed. K.Á. Ma. Garibay, 2 vols. (Mexico City: 1967); Trexler R.C., *Reliving Golgotha: The Passion Play of Iztapalapa* (Cambridge, MA: 2003); Klein C.F., "The Aztec Sacrifice of Tezcatlipoca and Its Implications for Christ Crucified", in Arnade P. – Rocke M. (eds.), *Power, Gender, and Ritual in Europe and America: Essays in Memory of Richard C. Trexler* (Toronto: 2008) 273–297.

could not enter the culprit's home). In fact, Ottoman authorities were expected to operate only and exclusively in a public context.[10] Did the existence of these safely and carefully guarded havens, private spaces undisturbed by the authorities, also favour private devotions? Were the latter domestically expressed and carried out possibly more freely than elsewhere? Did this particular context of spatial arrangements effect, in quantity and quality, a substantial difference from those devotional rituals emerging in contemporary European and South American cities?

Finally, if we turn our attention to East Asia, things yet again were different. The emergence of a private sphere in a relatively late period – compared to the Middle Eastern and European contexts (sixteenth–nineteenth centuries) – is still a debated subject. Recently, a group of East Asian historians have begun to postulate the possibility that the arguments offered by Jürgen Habermas (who introduced the idea of the emergence of a 'public sphere' in Europe only in the eighteenth century) are undoubtedly also applicable to non-European contexts.[11] Historians of old Korea maintain, for example, that before the early modern period (expressed on a European-centred periodization) Korea was a country characterized by a predominantly agricultural economy, inhabited by a society divided between peasants and aristocrats, where religious identity was dominant: here concepts such as 'privacy' and individuality were practically non-existent.[12] Although the concept which Habermas expressed in *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, involving a clear distinction between public and private,[13] has been heavily criticized by some prominent scholars, such as Dena Goodman and especially Katherine Lynch (who argued that in the late medieval and early modern age, there were no

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10   See Ayalon Y., "Ottoman Urban Privacy in Light of Disaster Recovery", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, 3 (2011) 513–528; see also Marcus A., "Privacy in Eighteenth-Century Aleppo: The Limits of Cultural Ideas", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18, 2 (1986) 165–183.

11   Habermas J., *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: 1962); Rowe W.T., "The Public Sphere in Modern China", *Modern China* 16 (1990) 309–329; Ryan M.P., "Gender and Public Access: Women's Politics in Nineteenth-Century America", in Calhoun C. (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: 1992) 259–288; Forment C.A., *Democracy in Latin America, 1760–1900* (Chicago: 2003); Ikegami E., *Bonds of Civility: Aesthetic Networks and the Political Origins of Japanese Culture* (Cambridge: 2005).

12   Yi T-J., "The Socio-Economic Background of Neo-Confucianism in Korea of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries", *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 2 (1989) 39–63.

13   Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* passim.

strictly distinct public and private areas, but that they were correlated and almost inseparable),[14] Habermas's postulates have been adopted by a number of critics. These have followed in his steps in formulating the hypothesis of the emergence of a public sphere in China,[15] pre-modern and Tokugawa Japan (1600–1868),[16] and Chosôn Korea (1506–1800), roughly during the same period in which it emerged in Europe, arguing, at the same time, for the idea of a parallel existence of a private sphere, notable, for example, in the secondary and tertiary teaching institutions called 'Academies'.[17]

From this brief account of a worldwide distinction between private and public areas, it emerges clearly that the understanding of what we refer to as public and private may vary according to historical periods and places, and that what was commonly regarded as a private or semiprivate area in one given place might not have been considered as such in another one in a different time. It is also apparent that if these differences were not so important in the transition from the medieval to the Renaissance city in a European context, this was not the case with the advent of radical changes in the formation of the bourgeois city in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Here, the representations, forms, functions and use of public spaces, and therefore, likewise of private spaces, also changed on account of profound alterations in the processes of accumulation, exchange and consumption of goods necessary to material life. Even more important to our consideration, therefore, becomes the distinction between public and private within a global dimension: in fact, this issue is crucial to our point of view, since public and private spaces, as social products, largely influenced and characterized individual and collective religious and devotional experiences and processes. If the first, the public spaces – like squares, streets, churches, mosques and synagogues – provided access and enjoyment that were in principle equal for everyone, private places such as homes, on the contrary, were defined by the right of the owners to regulate their access. How, then, was private space organized and used in a place like the city, which, essentially up to the advent of the industrial era, remained, with few exceptions, a place of public and shared spaces? How did

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14   Goodman D., "Public Sphere and Private Life: Toward a Synthesis of Current Historiographical Approaches to the Old Regime", *History and Theory* 31 (1992) 1–20; Lynch K.A., *Individuals, Families, and Communities in Europe, 1200–1800: The Urban Foundations of Western Society* (Cambridge: 2003).

15   Fewsmith J., "From Guild to Interest Group: The Transformation of Public and Private in Late Qing China", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 25 (1983) 617–640.

16   Ikegami, *Bonds of Civility* passim.

17   Koo J.-W., "The Origins of the Public Sphere and Civil Society: Private Academies and Petitions in Korea, 1506–1800", *Social Science History* 31, 3 (2007) 381–409.

change also affect the conditions of existence and usability of private spheres, according to different criteria and specific legislation that obviously differed too, from place to place? Despite the obvious importance of this crucial aspect of the discussion, if we take for granted the existence of a definite 'public' space opposed to the concept of 'private', we may run the risk of overlaying the concept of public space itself with certain urban features (such as urban layout and civic architecture) – which were in fact very diversified. In turn this may lead to the mistake of not considering the range of different type of people who inhabited them. Observing public space, which exists in all human settlements of any kind and magnitude, only as a container of social practices leads to the misstep of confusing it with the functions to which certain places are destined for.

It is therefore even more necessary to understand in relation to the definition of 'public' what the house, the embodiment par excellence of 'privacy', meant to all these people, and what a 'home' environment signified to them. The home was the site of birth and death, of sickness and health, of conjugal life and reproduction, of child rearing, of hardship and prosperity. Across boundaries of faith and geography devotions evolved that served the needs of the members of a household as they confronted the demands of everyday life. We must pinpoint the necessity of treating the house as 'constituted by contingent and shifting concatenations of people, spaces, and objects'.[18] In order to shed light on early modern and modern house interiors in a global context, then, studying spatial arrangements as well as the materiality of the household and the house itself becomes essential. Furthermore, the identification of transitional social spaces is crucial to understanding concepts such as 'domestic' versus 'public', or 'private' versus 'collective'. Of course a general interest in practices in the micro-space of the house must include domestic work and leisure, consumption, sociability, genre, display, and childrearing in their connections with devotional practice. While the authors of the essays in this volume emphasize how the display of certain religious artefacts, religious paintings, and works of religious art became a true vehicle for the individual and at times typical expression of an otherwise socially patterned ritual like religion, they also illustrate how the transmission and reinforcement of certain cultural ideas and artistic models became part of renewed social rituals within which religion played a major role.

Homes included spaces devoted to work, living, display, and quasi-public sociability, each of which could be filled with specific everyday objects, but

18   Campbell E.J. – Miller S.R. – Consavari E.C. (eds.), *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior 1400–1700: Objects, Spaces, Domesticities* (Farnham: 2013) 9.

also with devotional items. Moreover, the diffusion of certain objects within the house, like religious paintings, devotional images, relics and so on, which were specifically reserved for public or semi-public display, can be regarded as crucial evidence for the circulation of knowledge and new devotional attitudes within a shifting history of devotion. While this concept has already been widely explored by both economic and material culture historians, it is the 'domestic' and 'devotional' approach that is worthy of note here. Again, transformation over space and time is key. More precisely, can we detect a functional differentiation and reorganization of domestic settings into several specialized spaces devoted to practising one's devotions? How does this vary according to geographic areas and time periods? Are there more similarities than differences? And if so, are the similarities pronounced? And what was the role of those who lived in the house in the construction of devotional processes? It is obvious that the question of social differentiation in the domestic sphere also applies to the analysis of devotion.

In this regard, of course, we must take into consideration the concept of human identity. Identity must be here understood as based on two fundamental issues: the first concerns our genealogical inheritance; in essence we all share a common heritage from our remote ancestors, in spite of millennia of migration and the formation of different cultures, languages and so on. This implies that to write about 'differences' in the way devotions were performed on an intimate level in such disparate areas of the world may be, in the end, comparable to an exercise like writing about one common 'devotional' identity. The second aspect concerns our mutual sharing of a single, common natural environment, which, if regarded as the whole world itself, regardless of its geographical, political, ideological, and human-imposed boundaries, is again, our 'home'. In this respect, the concept of human devotion worldwide becomes a subject extremely worthy of attention and makes this book a worthy enterprise for it encompasses an analysis of the multiple ways in which humans around the world manifested their common identity through expressing their natural and inner feelings about their relationship with the sacred.

What has identity to do with the family? Are these two concepts interrelated? Regardless of his or her social and economic condition, place of birth and residence, race, gender and so on, an individual is always a member of a family. A family is here to be understood as a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, constituting a single household and interacting with each other in their respective social positions, usually those of spouses, parents, children and siblings. The family group should be distinguished from a household, which may include boarders and domestic personnel, or even slaves sharing a common residence. Additionally, however, sometimes the

family included not only the parents and their unmarried children living at home, but also children that had married, their spouses, and their offspring, and possibly elderly dependents as well; such an arrangement is called an extended family. This is not the place to discuss each and every implication of the concept of 'household' and 'family' in the given areas explored by the essays in this volume. However, a clear specification must be made about what the household and family respectively represented in terms of shared values and individual identity in a wide context. At its best, the family performed various valuable functions for its members. Perhaps most important of all, it provided emotional and psychological security, particularly through the warmth, love, and companionship that living together generated between spouses and in turn between them and their children. The family also provided a valuable social and political function by institutionalizing procreation and by providing guidelines for the regulation of sexual conduct. The family additionally provided such other socially beneficial functions as the rearing and socialization of children, along with such humanitarian activities as caring for its members when they were sick or disabled. Remaining on the social side, the family served to promote order and stability within society as a whole. Additionally, on the economic side, the family provided food, shelter, clothing, and physical security for its members, some of whom may have been too young or too old to provide for the basic necessities of life themselves. One school of sociological and historical studies dating from the 1970s, especially of Western families (but not restricted to them), tended to concentrate on the family's economic and instrumental aspects, including the transfer of property at marriage and through inheritance, rather than its ideological or experiential qualities. This version of Western kinship was overturned partly by feminist studies, which instead subjected relations within the household, the control of property, and the concept of privacy to a sustained, and very analytical scrutiny. The notion of the 'private', defined as the world of the family as a haven from the 'public' world of work and competitive economic relations emerged, then, as an ideological construct that was itself a suitable object of analysis. In this regard, the endeavour to explicate kinship as a symbolic system of meanings that carried over into other ideological spheres (such as religion) had a strong influence on subsequent studies.[19] Many later accounts of kinship therefore, both in Western and in non-Western societies, have retained the core of the culturalist approach, while also paying close attention to local experiences and understandings of kinship and providing nuanced depictions of how people in

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19   On this see Wheaton R., "Family and Kinship in Western Europe: The Problem of the Joint Family Household", *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 5, 4 (1975) 601–628.

a given culture might have divergent understandings of kinship depending on their age, sex, ethnicity, personal experiences, or other attributes.[20]

1   Private and Public

The volume is organized into thematic sections, where some of the common questions that emerge across the chapters will be flagged up, thus highlighting some of the possible links between them. Having briefly outlined the implications of a much-needed differentiation in the understanding of concepts such as 'public', 'private', and the definition of 'household', something to which we may attach from now on the concept of 'domestic', the study of devotion within a domestic context becomes crucial for the investigation of how public rituals could be performed in a more intimate setting, by private individuals.[21] Religious festivities, wedding celebrations, and in general all those activities traditionally associated with collective and public gatherings were re-enacted within the home, which as a consequence became a place for socialization, as is the case of early modern Jewish or Muslim homes.

The chapters included in the volume show how domestic devotion was affected by and responded to contingency. It seems legitimate to talk of the micro-politics of domestic devotion as a tool for shaping the social body and social identities. Far from being merely a matter of individual observance, domestic piety involved the family in the broad meaning of kinship whilst also engaging communities or networks of believers. The building or strengthening of social bonds is often pursued through religious identity. This emerges in *Torsten Wollina*'s chapter on the use of devotional books in early modern Damascus. The chapter, addressing the frequently overlooked issue of domestic devotion in the pre-modern Muslim world, relies on the journal by Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq, also studied in Marion Katz's contribution. Wollina draws from his source a wealth of information on the circulation of devotional books. In particular, he calls our attention to the threats associated with their use. Books were in fact tools for instruction and for the transmission of knowledge and were thus never entirely domestic. Wollina explains how the distinction between sacred and profane space was not spatial, but rather was created by

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20   Hartman M.S., *The Household and the Making of History: A Subversive View of the Western Past* (Cambridge: 2004).

21   Although 'private' and 'public', and the very notion of 'domestic', when referred to the early modern home, are rather problematic categories, as discussed above; see also Sarti R., *Europe at Home: Family and Material Culture 1500–1800* (New Haven – London: 2002), especially chapter 1.

'the deliberate pronunciation of words'. Books were venerated not only for their content but also as authoritative objects; they were often circulated within a close kinship group, thus reinforcing the latter's identity. A book was a source of blessings that extended to present and future relatives. Books thus connected their owners to 'admirable figures from past generations', conferring the spiritual blessings with which they were endowed upon their present and future owners. As a consequence, the power of the book, and the issues of control related to the circulation of texts, connected in a privileged way the domestic space with the public space of libraries and schools, tightening kinship bonds.

The dichotomy between private and public devotional spaces was also present within the Jewish world. *Dotan Arad* explores the peculiar case of Jews living in the Ottoman Empire. The relative religious freedom enjoyed by Jews ended with the kingdom of Bayezid II (1447–1512) when newly issued rules forbade the building of new synagogues so that only those existing before the Muslim conquest were allowed. These regulations conflicted with the desire of immigrant groups to preserve their identity and their liturgical traditions. Jews ended up locating their synagogues not in public buildings, but rather in private homes. In Arad's words, synagogues became a 'framework for self-determination'. Unfortunately, locating synagogues in private homes eventually led to conflicts between the owner and the worshippers, thus weakening the community. Hosting synagogues in the houses of private individuals caused the concentration of power in the hands of a few rich people. Arad's case study is also intriguing in that it shows how forms of private devotion could interfere not only with the establishment or tightening of a kinship bond, but also with the general economy of a city, thus making an impact on the dynamics of power at many different levels.

The political dimension of domestic devotions also emerges from *Martin Christ*'s contribution on Johan Leisentrit and his instructions for the sick and the dying. A Catholic priest and the dean and general commissioner for Upper and Lower Lusatia, Leisentrit published his *ars moriendi* under the title of *Catholisch Pfarbuch* in 1578. Leisentrit was the head of the Catholic minority of Upper Lusatia, protected by the Catholic Habsburgs. In order to avoid conflicts with the Lutheran majority, Leisentrit thought it useful to accept some compromises and developments not entirely in line with post-Tridentine Catholicism. He was particularly concerned about the moment of death, when, given the state of despair and confusion, conversions could happen more easily. He thus inserted some Lutheran elements into his *ars moriendi*. In the absence of a central religious authority, it was possible to express religiosity in individualistic ways. In his work Leisentrit shows acute awareness of the fact 'that the bedchamber of a dying person was a liminal space in

multiple ways: between public and domestic, sacred and profane, inside and outside, life and death'. Besides, he knew well that a burial code was a public affair, and a confessional marker. Given his peculiar position – he was responsible for both the Catholic and the Lutheran population of the region – it was likely that he wanted to avoid conflicts. Despite this, he built into his work a narrative in which Catholics were persecuted by Lutherans. In order to smooth over the confessional divide, he sought a kind of compromise, so as to thwart attempts at conversion on the death bed, which was a disputed place. As Christ observes, this had an intriguing consequence: 'Leisentrit's accommodating approach, together with the porous boundaries between public and private, throws up the question of what, precisely, a confessional, domestic space was'.

2   Coexistence

The increasing attention to global or world history almost necessarily implies a study also of how, in a connected world, religious beliefs interacted and related to each other. As a matter of fact, this point was being made by early modern historians themselves: at the same time as the first histories of the world were being written, an interest in the proto-comparative study of religion and of devotional practices emerged.[22] It is arguable that, while public worship is more markedly shaped by official religious institutions, domestic devotion is to a higher degree responsive to the encounters between different religious communities, ideas, and beliefs. In the early modern world, marked by confessional divide (often within the same country) and global connections, the study of domestic piety should also be set in a global perspective. This volume posits itself precisely at the intersection of the contemporary debate between connective and comparative history. As Caroline Douki and Philippe Minard have pointed out in their introduction to the monographic issue of the *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* entitled 'Histoire globale, histoires connectées: un changement d'échelle historiographique?', we live in a moment of historiographical instability marked by different approaches.[23] However, as recent scholarship has also highlighted, there is

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22   On world histories, see Subrahmanyam S., *Aux origines de l'histoire globale* (Paris: 2014); Marcocci G., *Indios, cinesi, falsari. Le storie del mondo nel Rinascimento* (Rome – Bari: 2016). On early modern comparative histories of religion see Ginzburg C., "Provincializing the World: Europeans, Indians, Jews (1704)", *Postcolonial Studies* 14 (2011) 135–150.

23   '"Globale", "connectée", "comparée", "croisée", "transnationale": les oscillations […] manifestent assez l'instabilité du moment historiographique', Douki C. – Minard P., "Introduction", *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 54 (2007) 7–21: 17.

no need to choose between the two approaches. If, according to Douki and Minard, in their work on the multiple interactions of the early modern world, 'l'histoire connectée retrouve […] la fécondité des effets de décentrement qui font la force de la méthode comparative', Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka have stated that 'comparative and entanglement history are being combined in new ways'.[24] In articulating the complex relations between a global world and local realities, connected history can combine its approach with the methodology of microhistory, creating what have been defined 'jeux d'échelles', or the continuous shifting from the individual case study to its broader context and vice versa.[25] This volume seeks precisely to explore a series of case studies (investigated often with the tools of microhistory) and to set them into a connective context – thus exploring the reciprocal influences of different spiritual systems.[26]

The above-mentioned connective approach can be best appreciated in examples of coexistence (for example, Jews and Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, or Catholics and *Moriscos* in Spain, Confucianism and Buddhism in Korea, or Catholics and Protestants in France). Such a viewpoint warns against a static conception of confessional beliefs and practices and instead points to the ever-changing and reactive nature of devotion and religious identity. The house is the place where the effects of religious coexistence can be best assessed. On the one hand, religious minorities were often not allowed to display their devotion in public. Even where and when a certain degree of religious toleration was granted, the home was the safest place to perform religious rituals. On the other hand, when religious tolerance was not granted, it was advisable for members of religious minorities to keep in the house a range of religious objects that testified to their adherence to the official religion. This eventually (and inevitably) influenced their practices and beliefs, as the chapter by *Borja Franco Llopis* and *Francisco Javier Moreno Díaz del Campo* shows. The authors explore the use of images by Spanish *Moriscos* after their forced conversion in 1492. They point out that the presence of Catholic images within the household

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24   Douki – Minard, "Introduction" 20; Haupt H.G. – Kocka J., "Comparison and Beyond: Traditions, Scope, and Perspectives of Comparative History", in Haupt H.G. – Kocka J. (eds.), *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (New York – Oxford: 2009) 1–30: 21.

25   Douki – Minard, "Introduction" 21; on this issue see also Ginzburg C., "Microstoria: due o tre cose che so di lei", in Ginzburg C., *Il filo e le tracce. Vero falso finto* (Milan: 2006) 241–269.

26   The study of devotion allows us to assess from a privileged point of view the idea of cultural *métissage* as one of the main consequences of early modern globalization; this is investigated by Serge Gruzinski in his book *L'histoire, pour quoi faire?* (Paris: 2015).

was crucial in avoiding inquisitorial accusations; although this should not prevent us from believing that many former Muslims actually embraced the new faith. Franco Llopis and Díaz del Campo show that simulation – or dissimulation – was a complex issue. It revolved around the status of images in Islamic art and problems such as idolatry and iconoclasm. In many cases, the hatred of images was simply a reaction against the imposition of Catholic faith. In other cases, *Moriscos* showed a certain degree of flexibility, embracing Catholic beliefs and worship practices that they considered acceptable. For instance, the Immaculate Conception was a favourite as Muslims, too, thought that the Virgin had been conceived without sin. Likewise, St Alexius, a saint who had left his family to travel to Rome to follow the word of God, became symbolic of the *Morisco* diaspora and of those who had left their homes to venerate their God. This study shows that the *Morisco* home was a 'hybrid space of private devotions', one in which the coexistence of Christian and Muslim images created a form of religious syncretism.[27]

Issues of coexistence are also to be found in Korea where, under the Chosŏn dynasty, Confucianism became the state religion, replacing Buddhism after eight centuries. *Soyeon Kim* analyses a painting from 1562 known as *The Gathering of the Four Buddhas*. After reconstructing the history of the devotion and the iconography of the Four Buddhas, Kim sets the painting into the context of the ambivalent coexistence of the two religions. A 'non-orthodox icon', the Four Buddhas are 'non-orthodox deities that had been celebrated by public worship', and as such, they were connected more to popular beliefs than to Buddhist orthodoxy. The painting was commissioned by prince Yi Chongnin 'for the well-being' of his grandfather, Kwŏn Ch'an. Buddhism still exerted a strong influence on domestic and private piety: it is no surprise then that, two years after the official Confucian funeral rites, a Buddhist private rite was performed for Kwŏn Ch'an which involved a painting displaying a popular Buddhist iconography. If the chapter by Borja Franco Llopis and Díaz del Campo demonstrated what we might call religious eclecticism, this chapter exemplifies how coexisting faiths could be mutually exclusive of each other. At the same time, it allows us to assess a different side of domestic devotion, namely, its deep connections with popular beliefs. This aspect is peculiar to domestic piety: since, as we have seen, the house is intimately connected with

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27   When using the word 'syncretism' we are aware of its potential risks, as highlighted in Richard H.L., "Religious Syncretism as a Syncretistic Concept: The Inadequacy of the 'World Religions' Paradigm in Cross-Cultural Encounter", *International Journal of Frontier Missiology* 31, 4 (2014) 209–215.

humanity's deepest, ancestral concerns, anxieties and hopes, it is no wonder that domestic piety is affected by beliefs deeply rooted in folkloric culture.[28]

Kathleen Ashley, in her chapter on Protestant worship in France, adds further dimensions to the coexistence of beliefs in a time of religious change. She focuses on the case of Etienne Mathieu, a citizen of Chalon-sur-Saône, who was tried by the city authorities in 1594, at a time when Protestant practices were allowed, albeit with many restrictions, in France. The trial was triggered by his defence, during a public discussion, of everyone's right to practise his or her devotions within the private sphere. In fact, a man had been complaining about his neighbour singing the Psalms in the vernacular version in her house. This raised a complex jurisdictional problem. Huguenots used to sing the Psalms publicly in Marot's version to shape their identity as a group opposed to Catholics. In France, Protestantism was not entirely prohibited; rather, it was allowed under specific rules. But these were constantly changing, a situation that led to 'continuous contention over what behaviours were legal'. What is more, Etienne Mathieu had been a Protestant in the past: his shifting identities made him even more suspect and he was eventually sentenced to abjuration. This proves, as Ashley observes, that the domestic space 'was *not* off-limits' to regulation by the city authorities. Domestic devotion thus posed serious questions about the ways in which group as well as personal identities were shaped in the early modern world. At the same time, domestic devotion was a crucible for the elaboration of the increasingly complex relationship between civic and religious authorities as well as for the elaboration of the cultural and legal definition of the private sphere.

3   Women and Devotion

Our focus on the home invites us to pay further attention to female experiences of devotion, being, however, aware that their range of experiences did

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28   We are very well aware of the problems connected with the use of terms such as 'popular religion' or 'popular culture' and of the ongoing debate about them; see Zardin D., "La 'religione popolare': interpretazioni storiografiche e ipotesi di ricerca", in Saccardo L. – Zardin D. (eds.), *Arte, religione e comunità nell'Italia rinascimentale e barocca* (Milan: 2000) 3–23; Gentilcore D., "Was there a 'Popular Medicine' in Early Modern Europe?", *Folklore* 115 (2004) 151–166; Klaniczay G., "'Popular Culture' in Medieval Hagiography and in Recent Historiography", in Golinelli P. (ed.), *Agiografia e culture popolari. Hagiography and Popular Cultures* (Bologna: 2012) 17–43; Benigno F., *Parole nel tempo. Un lessico per pensare la storia* (Rome: 2013) 79–114; Niccoli O., "Cultura popolare. Un relitto abbandonato?", *Studi storici* 4 (2015) 997–1010.

not confine them to a home environment and to the role of dispensers or educators of religious/devotional habits. Although this book is not intended to figure within the wide panorama of publications on gender studies, the recognition of women as historical actors through their agency, craftsmanship, and religious sensitivity described in some of the essays cannot be underestimated. The analysis and the reach of some case studies prove that women's skill and overall ability to entertain successful social and business relationships for example, within a domestic context, does not necessarily make them ideal subjects for studying phenomena of religious devotion. Instead, women could promote themselves beyond a patriarchal equilibrium and find a place in society. Yet, we cannot but realize that some of our case studies empirically suggest the overwhelming link between the domestic and women's devotion. The study of women's religiosity in early modern Europe is well established as a vibrant field in its own right.[29] This is less the case for Arab countries and even less so for East Asia.[30] We believe that the recovery of this legacy of female religious experience helps to demonstrate conclusively that faith offered one of the most significant vehicles for the formation and expression of female subjectivity in the pre-modern and modern world.

The home proves an ideal place to study female agency and religiosity. In fact, houses were not only the main stage for important life-cycle events such as childbirth and death, but also the least restricted place where women could practice their religiosity. It is true that gender confounded religious ideals and practices or made them more problematic: in eighteenth-century Brazil, for instance, echoes of both Catholic ceremonies and material *apparati* of Catholic devotion persisted alongside syncretic devotional practices performed by female devotees, as Cristina Osswald's work makes clear.

This theme also bears upon the fundamental issues of the redefinition of domestic space and of the creation of sacred space. The existence, in different cultural settings, of domestic rituals, calls for a comparative outlook. In this regard, the materiality of devotion – in a broad sense – is key, both in the study

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29   See some of the essays contained in Poska A.M. – Couchman J. – McIver K.A. (eds.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (London – New York: 2013), *Part I: Religion.*

30   On the subject of Islamic religious traditions and issues of essential concern to women, see Katz M.H., "Women's *Mawlid* Performances in *Sanaa* and the Construction of 'Popular Islam'", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40 (2008) 467–484; Katz M.H., "Scholarly Versus Women's Authority in the Islamic Law of Menstrual Purity", in Kashani-Sabet F. – Wenger B.S. (eds.), *Gender in Judaism and Islam: Common Lives, Uncommon Heritage* (New York – London: 2015) 73–105; on similar themes for Jewish religion and women's rituals and practices, see Biale R., *Women and Jewish Law: The Essential Texts, Their History, and Their Relevance for Today* (New York: 1995).

of devotional artefacts and of domestic rituals. Hence, chapters in this volume pay attention to objects and to rituals such as, for example, those connected to food, and their role in demarcating sacred time and space (a subject explored in contributions that range in their focus from Muslim Syria to the Jewish world).

The definition of sacred space through rituals, practices, objects is thus at the heart of this volume. As many of the chapters suggest, the term 'domestic' seems to allude to a space of one's own, rather than specifically a house. It is thus fascinating to examine the process leading a former Tibetan princess to live like a Buddhist nun. *Hildegard Diemberger* offers us a rare glimpse into the life of one fifteenth-century Tibetan Princess, Chokyi Dronma (1422–1455), the daughter of a rural nobleman. The analysis focuses on the biography written by a male follower of the princess-nun, which is read comparatively alongside medieval European hagiographies. Diemberger demonstrates that domestic devotions were among the lay religious practices that offered a powerful framework within which a woman could deal with the full range of challenges that impacted on her life as daughter, wife, mother and grand-mother; in fact in fifteenth-century Tibet the monastic life offered, through patronage, a way of promoting oneself in a male-driven universe, as well as a means to pursue one's aspirations if they involved any form of spiritual endeavour. Additionally, devotion performed in the home also meant inter-action and negotiation between genders: women performing devotional practices often acted according to spiritual guidance provided by men, and men were frequently relied upon by women to 'create' multiple models of 'governance' of the household and family to support diverse spiritual goals. Although women were juridically located beyond the sacerdotal boundaries of the Church, gender studies have recently offered some of the most interest-ing paths into the religious world of women in the early modern and modern era, bringing into play women's religious experience *per se*, their relations with (clerical and lay) men, religious discipline, and the treatment of other margin-alized groups.

Even stronger is the role of women in Jewish domestic devotions, as *Debra Kaplan*'s chapter shows. Although the author suggests that the boundaries be-tween private and public were not always clear-cut, it is true that there was a whole set of rituals and chores that were performed by women within the household. In fact, domestic work was infused to a great extent with religious meaning (we only need to think of highly ritualized acts such as the prepa-ration of food); besides, Jewish women had no choice other than to marry. Particularly in crypto-Jewish communities, in which devotion was forcibly do-mestic, as Dotan Arad's chapter also makes clear, women became 'the leaders

[...] who passed on traditions to the next generation'. The authors explore many of the domestic rituals and the ways in which a sacred space was created in the house, drawing interesting parallels with the Protestant 'holy household' studied by Lyndal Roper. As Kaplan suggests, Jewish devotion was thus highly gendered.

4   Licit and Unorthodox

Many of the chapters in the volume show how, both in Europe and in the wider early modern world, the household was the site of tensions between the laity and religious authorities, or of the interaction between licit and unorthodox practices. Religious hybridization, the survival of local beliefs, the existence of devotional practices that escaped the boundaries of official cultic forms were not peculiar to Europe but could be found all over the early modern world. It is no wonder, then, that religious authorities sought to tame (domestic) devotional practices that were perceived as inappropriate. These did not necessarily fall in the realm of heterodoxy: some belonged to traditions rooted in folkloric culture, or simply bore traces of pagan cultures. In such cases, the authorities tried to reformulate such practices in more orthodox terms. *Yang Jungyoon* explores the case of Dutch Calvinist authorities trying to reform and spiritualize the production of epithalamia. Nuptial texts were perceived as obscene, besides relying on the classical tradition of erotic poetry; furthermore, 'seventeenth-century vernacular epithalamia [...] played into a long tradition of the ancient custom of singing nuptial songs outside the bridal chamber'. Thus, they were re-written and replaced by biblical texts and images extolling the virtue of chastity. Alongside this, such ideas were disseminated in other genres, such as emblem books, conduct manuals and songbooks, all 'stressing the importance of religious rather than physical consummation'.

A case in point concerning the interaction between local and/or pre-existing beliefs and orthodoxy is that of Brazil studied by *Cristina Osswald*. In 1720 Tridentine rules were finally applied to Brazil. The house became the centre of orthodox Catholic devotions (the cult of Christ and of Mary) and domestic rituals were strongly influenced by those of the major congregations, such as the Franciscans or the Benedictines, thus stressing the continuities between public and private worship. This was all the more evident in the case of the cloistered *beatas*, who lived a 'radical form' of religious life, often within the house. The peculiar social and economic structures of Brazil, organized in *fazendas* and *engenhos*, allowed for an even more marked overlapping of the boundaries between public and private. In fact, public ceremonies were

celebrated in these rather isolated and small communities, thus becoming, in effect, private rites. The difficulty of exerting strict control over such a fragmented reality allowed 'an overly personalized view of worship' and forms of religious syncretism, which were also due to the presence of Indian and African communities. African slaves and Jews who had moved to Brazil after 1497, after Manuel I ordered the conversion of the Jews, kept on practising their rituals. Figures such as the *pajés*, a figure halfway between a priest and a doctor, continued to act, and old and new rituals were combined 'exaggerating the points of resemblance between the two'. Once again, it is evident how issues such as private and public, licit and illicit, were deeply entangled, and recurred, with only minor differences, across cultures.

5   Shaping Identities

The benefits of a comparative approach may be seen by juxtaposing devotional practices, such as those from Damascus and Amsterdam: only by comparing and contrasting the experiences of different groups is it possible to discern what is structural and what is contingent about religious practices in the home.[31]

Alongside the use of religion to legitimize power and to promote social harmony, its role in fashioning identities and shaping communities has led to renewed interest in devotional themes. In this vein, Jews are not studied – as has been the case in the past – simply as financiers, moneylenders, Hebrew teachers, and victims of Christian anti-Semitism – though they were often that – but as members of communities which, though never free of the dilemma of negotiating

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31   A successful model of comparative history was offered by Peter Burke, who, by analysing the cases of more than 200 Venetian aristocrats, and comparing them with members of Amsterdam city council, highlighted the inherent disparities between the two cities (religious denominations, different stances towards wealth and capitalism, urban layout and expansion), but also pointed to the similarities between them in terms of their civic pride, displayed by both Venice and Amsterdam, their essentially urban character, and their religious tolerance; see *Venice and Amsterdam: A Study of Seventeenth-Century Élites* (London: 1974). A second model is offered by the work of Adams J., *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe* (Ithaca: 2007), who, by analysing the familial power structure of the Dutch elite and its companies (in particular the Dutch East India Company) in the Golden Age, created a convincing theory of how modern European states came to be shaped on the templates provided by the Dutch elite. Both studies promoted a successful example of how comparative historical analysis, starting from archival examination, coupled with careful investigation of causes and implications such as gender (Adam) and societal bonds (Burke), can function effectively.

their relations with the dominant religion of the host country, possessed a dynamic culture of their own. The boundaries between Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are seen to be more fluid and porous. Current interest in globalization, mass migration, social inclusion/exclusion and materiality has repositioned our understanding of the modes of devotion in the early modern and modern period and deserves further attention.

The following chapters illuminate the need to expand our cultural horizons to imagine forms of devotion 'alternative' to the ones with which, as historians of European, or Western civilizations in general, we are probably more familiar, and also offer interesting interpretations of how religious devotion could act as a glue for collective identity, if not as a trigger for the search for a given identity.

Kathlyn Ryor, for instance, examines the importance of providing opportunities for *literati* artists to explore their cultural knowledge and identity through the medium of painting and relationships with other inspirational community members in late Ming Dynasty China. Assuming that each culture has one identity of its own, the *literati* artists in late Ming Dynasty China were the people who had created a 'second' identity through their artworks: the techniques employed by the artists were influenced by their religious ideas; and in turn these techniques were shaped by the artists' own domestic devotions. In essence, the artists were creating works in a world imbued with doctrinal and traditional depictions of Buddhist subject matter, reflecting with their ink brushes their beliefs and doctrinal affinities.

Igor Sosa Mayor reviews the practices involving relics enacted by lay people in seventeenth-century Spain, thus reminding us of the uses that were made of relics to help define a collective religious identity. The discussion converges upon the theme of the role of knowledge within the identification and validation of relics in the city of Arjona. Within knowledge transfer the process of validation of masses of relics was scrutinized and widely inspected, through the building of a collective identity. This chapter explores the function of knowledge within this almost professional search for relics and the validation of their identity. Its central argument is that users attached meaning and value to religious and sacred objects such as relics, going through complex social, religious and political processes where knowledge played a key role, and especially religious knowledge, for the latter negotiated and 'consumed' relics in different ways. The chapter argues that 'by means of experiments laypeople were able to prove or reject the possible sacred character of their objects, and at the same time, by doing so, believers were actively seeking experiences with the sacred at different levels – religious, sensorial and moral'. By conducting small experiments, laypeople took the initiative to investigate the qualities of

the bones and ashes, and actively sought to challenge some of the positions adopted by the official church about the status of certain relics.

The main focus of the chapter by *Marion Katz* is again related to 'knowledge', a particular type of knowledge that is the evaluation of the complex of beliefs and practices around the commemoration of the Prophet's birth – the so called *mawlid* – in Syria, and precisely in Damascus, in the fifteenth century. According to Katz, the interchange between what was essentially a convivial activity, and the religious profile of the family of the house where the *mawlid* was held, helped to build a sense of identity and belonging among the individuals gathering for the celebration, a coherence thereby communicated to the wider community of devotees. Drawing on the diary of a fifteenth-century Damascene notary, who left a unique glimpse of these ceremonies by recording his daily activities for two decades starting in 1480, Katz explains that the interchange between the gathering of the people and the serving of food was appropriate 'to any landmark in a Muslim's life trajectory, and to any auspicious incident that might occur along the way'. The gathering activities, and the festive celebrations involving the preparation and consumption of food, have always been regarded by historians as a means of shaping a community identity and providing a framework for it. Thus, by integrating this approach into the religious aspect of the *mawlid*, we discover a new devotional relationship between the commemoration ceremony and a widespread feature of people's religious identity.

6   The Materiality of Devotion

This section of the book examines devotional objects in different geographical, as well as confessional and chronological contexts. In fact, the book also comprises a series of contributions that focus specifically on the material aspects of modern devotion, exploring how each of the five human senses interacts with texts, holy imagery and many other items of devotion. By investigating the sense-object relationship/interaction from various perspectives, this section of the volume brings together the ideals of early modern and modern mystical beliefs, and the increasingly tangible material practice of piety. In fact, a recurrent theme of the past few years is that materiality is anything but static, much less dead.[32] Conversely, according to a tradition that originated within medieval mysticism, materiality was something which went beyond the purely

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32   A classic work that considers objects as having their own 'social life' is Appadurai A. (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (New York: 1988).

external, something that 'transcended' it, and that relied on the sensory world;[33] thus mysticism enabled the devotee to see through the material things so as to recapture their real essence and inner qualities.

The interplay between the senses is also related to another theme that threads through this volume: the understanding of signs and symbols and of the meanings they conveyed to contemporaries. A simple sign could convey a wealth of meanings which were all interlaced and yet concentrated around the truth of God. For this reason a mere artefact or object could trigger and open the way for a whole series of reflections and thoughts. For instance, a simple image of Christ on the cross could initiate a long array of considerations and mental replications of his suffering.

The three contributions in this section address all of the themes discussed above, though in rather different ways. Accordingly, *Suzanna Ivanič*'s chapter focuses on the understanding that amulets owned by Prague burghers could be used alongside Catholic items of devotion and Protestant bibles to allow access to the divine, and that the material of which amulets were made could itself act as a viable tool to interface with the transcendent. In her assessment of contemporary inventories and texts of natural philosophy and cosmology, Ivanič discusses the various forms of mediation between the 'magical'-folkloristic and religious-devotional characteristics of the amulets examined, showing how the natural world – in a period of cross-confessionalism – was 'infused with divine power'.

The contribution by *Hester Lees-Jeffries* offers a close reading of John Donne's poem *Devotions upon emergent occasions* (1624), set in the context of other devotional texts and early modern material culture, and specifically, as the author suggests, on what might be called the 'early modern textile imaginary'. Lees-Jeffries explores Donne's poetic and devotional outpourings on death and other life-cycle moments, such as birth and the consummation of marriage, in relation to the 'shared textile contexts and experiences' of early modern people. In particular, she draws on Sasha Roberts' remarks about the 'ritual and symbolic significance' of the bed to suggest the ways in which the Incarnation and the *Imitatio Christi*, key themes in Donne's poetry, might be imagined and meditated upon in textile terms.

Hanneke Van Asperen discusses, likewise, the meditative significance of objects, specifically religious badges and images of pilgrims' souvenirs in devotional manuscripts, rejecting the idea that such instruments could not affect the way devotees perceived sacred images in their daily devotions. On

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33   The book by Walker Bynum C., *Christian Materiality* (Brooklyn, NY: 2011) serves as an excellent example of this concept.

the contrary, Van Asperen is at pains to demonstrate that religious badges were crucial to the development of the late medieval/early modern system of 'mental pilgrimage' because of the interplay with our human senses, imagination and memory, and the way human senses could produce a host of holy perceptions. In this respect, when people flicked through the pages of their devotional books and found badges marking some particularly noteworthy passages, the book became a shrine of knowledge, a 'physical container or prayers and religious pictures', bringing the devotee closer to the object of worship.

7   Conclusion

'Modern historians readily divide piety into public and private, but this neglects the crucial, fertile, common ground of the household'.[34] The meaningful point that was raised by Alec Ryrie is also at the basis of this book, which by adopting a multidisciplinary approach, encompassing global history, art history, history of material culture, history of literature and history of the book, social history and gender studies, is centred on the understanding that the home was of paramount importance to an individual's religious experience.

Temples and churches are the natural habitat of historians of religion. Institutions, public rituals and religious leaders have a way of commanding scholarly attention. And yet if we restrict our gaze to only the most conspicuous aspects of the past we miss much that is of fundamental significance to human life. This volume is premised on the assumption that the home was a central space of religious practice and experience throughout the early modern world. This seems to us to be an uncontroversial if hitherto underexplored claim, which is borne out by the rich and varied evidence presented in this volume.

The contributions to this book, which deal with themes dating from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century, tell of the intimate relationship between humans and the sacred within the walls of the home (the home is understood as the place where one lived, be it the cell of a monastery or one's personal domestic space). The devotional objects and the books explored here were part of a constant dialogue in everyday life. To reproductions of the sacred within the home adults directed their daily prayers in moments of discomfort or difficulty; to them children were taught to address their first prayers; to them children prayed at the invitation of their elders. Nearly everywhere, daily devotions were expressed in many habits of life, such as those related to life cycle

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34   Ryrie A., *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: 2013) 363.

events (birth, marriage, death), as well as those connected to ways of dressing or eating, and therefore enmeshed within normal domestic life practices.

Starting from these methodological reflections, this book invites the reader to move beyond a concept of 'domestic devotion' that is clear cut and monolithic. Similarly, the volume also demonstrates that the home cannot be studied in isolation. The chapters instead point individually and collectively to the porosity of the home and its connectedness with other institutions and broader communities, and do so by adopting a flexible theory, one that can explain interactions taking place at different times, locations, cultural levels and so on. In this regard, we believe that the focus on domestic devotion from a comparative perspective is extremely fruitful.

Although the essays gathered in this volume cannot answer all the complex questions pertaining to domestic devotions and the multifarious relations between local cults and global history, they represent, however, a sampling of tentative but convincing suggestions about how and why we might go about unravelling devotional phenomena and constructing global history. This book is therefore dedicated to a new attempt to comprehend one of the most natural, common and shared human experiences – that is, devotion to the sacred, taking place in people's home environments across space and time – using historical enquiry to illuminate single processes of devotion. Many more studies will be needed to specify and explore further the historical processes of global devotional network construction and intensification. We have no doubt more will follow.

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PART 1

Complicating the Sacred Space: Private and Public

∵

The Brazilian House in the Eighteenth Century: Devotion at Home

Cristina Osswald

> Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.
> The spirit indeed is willing,
> but the flesh is weak.
> *MATTHEW* 26:41

∵

1 Introduction

In this essay, I discuss the striking aspects of domestic devotion or religiosity in eighteenth-century Brazil. I consider virtuous, as well as sinful conceptions of ritual, and how these relate to visible aspects of the design of spaces, and the popularity of certain objects for devotional use. This chronology corresponds to the period when Catholicism was definitively entrenched in Brazil.

It was not until the end of the seventeenth century, once the colony had become established in most of the territory constituting present-day Brazil, that it was possible to enhance and control more strictly the application of the reform vehiculated by priests and laymen knowledge and experience of religious life proclaimed by Trent. I highlight the organization of the Synod in Salvador da Bahia in 1707, leading to the publication in 1720 of the *First Constitutions of the Archdiocese of Bahia*, the official text applying the Tridentine rules to Brazil [Fig. 1.1].[1] Among other topics, the *Constitutions of Bahia*, as they are normally known, include a compilation of acts then considered particularly serious

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1 *Constituiçoens primeyras do Arcebispado da Bahia feytas, & ordenadas pelo Illustrissimo, e Reverendissimo Senhor D. Sebastiaõ Monteyro da Vide, Arcebispo do dito Arcebispado, & do Conselho de Sua Magestade, propostas, e aceytas em o sinodo Diocesano que o dito Senhor celebrou em 12. de Junho do anno de 1707*; (Lisbon, Officina de Paschoal da Sylva, impressor de Sua Majestade: 1719; reprint, São Paulo: 1853).
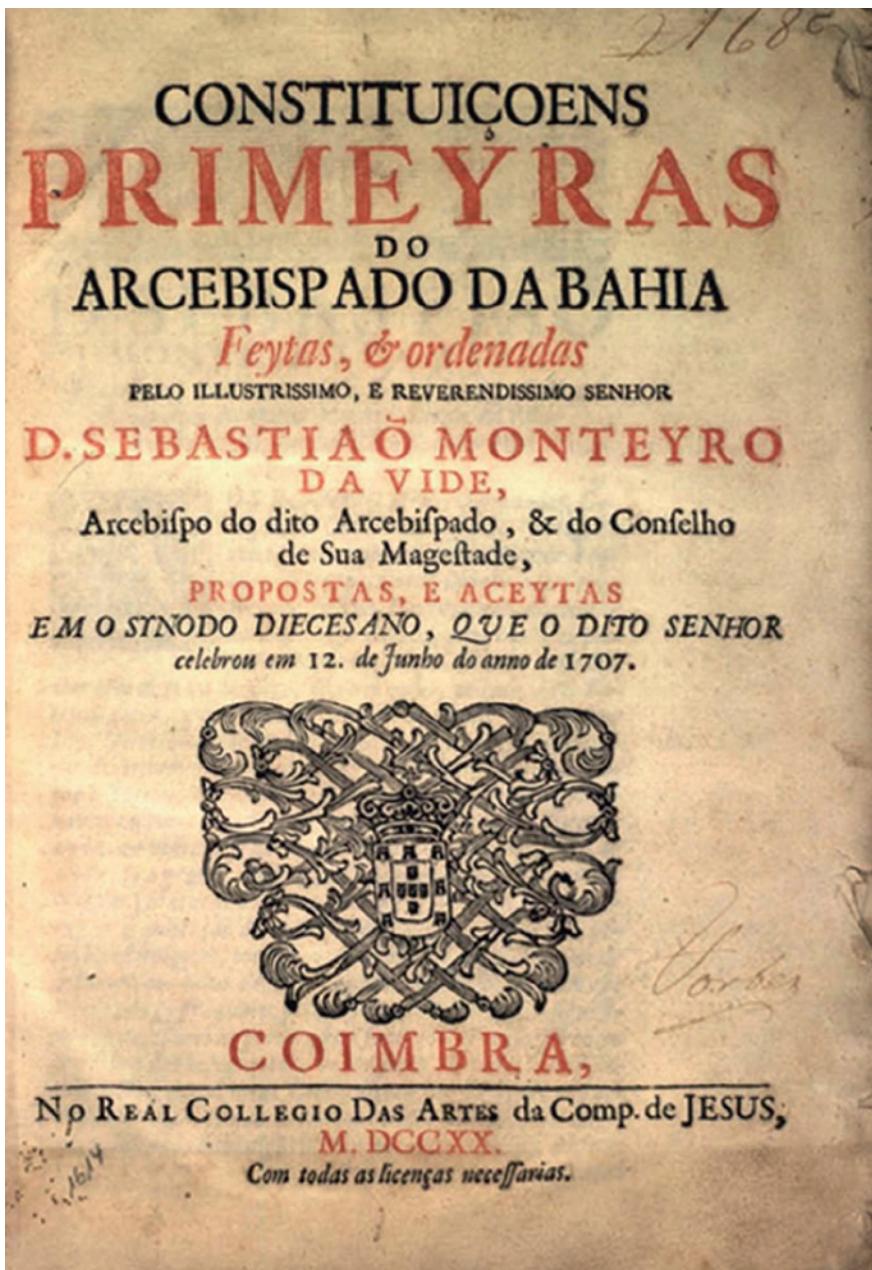
FIGURE 1.1   Sebastião Monteiro da Vide, *Constituições Primeiras da Arquidiocese da Bahia*
(Coimbra, no Real Colegio das Artes da Comp. de Jesus: 1720)
HTTPS://COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:CONSTITUI%C3
%A7%C3%B5ES_PRIMEIRAS_DO_ARCEBISPADO_DA_BAHIA.JPG

'crimes' against religion and the punishments applicable to them. Crimes of heresy, such as pacts with the devil, sorcery or even witchcraft, were punishable by excommunication.[2]

This study is especially interesting given the miscegenated population of Brazil that professed a variety of religions. It is chiefly in the home that we can consider the existence of any predictable deviations from the norm, given that there are greater opportunities to conceal such deviations from the authorities behind closed doors.

2   The Prescribed Cults

Religion could be seen everywhere in the design and use of space in many eighteenth-century Brazilian homes. A family's connection to a specific devotion was already visible outside their house in the form of a cross or of a flag bearing the respective iconography, which was also displayed in the communal areas.[3]

The popularity of certain devotions always reflects impositions by authorities. Drawing on the significant increase in printing during the Enlightenment, the Church sought to disseminate uniform rules for devotion, including the fostering of certain cults. For instance, the work *Mestre da vida que ensina a viver e morrer santamente* by the Dominican friar João Franco, which was so popular from the mid-seventeenth century until the end of the eighteenth century that it was reprinted seventeen times, includes the following series of instructions concerning the devotion to Christ and Mary to be followed by Catholics over the course of the day. In the ritual proposed by the author, the devout Catholic was to start his or her day by crossing him or herself and saying three Hail Marys while still in bed. While dressing he or she was to recite Christological prayers. And as soon as he or she had dressed he or she was to kneel before an image of Christ.[4]

In this epoch, domestic ritual and devotional paraphernalia honoured Christ and Mary in particular, and these were the two most important cults within Catholicism in Portugal as well. The special attachment of eighteenth-century

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2   *Constituiçõens Primeiras do Arcebispado da Bahia*, book v, chapter IV 314–315, 322.

3   Mott L., "Cotidiano e vivência religiosa: entre a capela e o calundu", in Novaes F.A. – Souza L.M. (eds.), *História da Vida Privada no Brasil, Cotidiano e vida privada na América portuguesa* (São Paulo: 1997) 156–220, here 164.

4   Franco João, *Mestre da vida, que ensina a viver, e morrer santamente* (Lisbon, Na Regia Officina Typografica: 1750) 1–2.

Brazilian households to the Passion is inferred at first glance from the spread of crucifixes.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the English visitor John Luccock wrote:

> Returning from a short ramble, in the cool of the evening, I found the family at vespers. [...] The doors of the oratory remained open, and the Crucifix exposed, until supper was just about to be served in the same room. The master then approached the sacred insignia, with great seriousness, made a profound bow to the image, and closed the doors.[5]

Indeed, the presence of private altars with images of Christ on the Cross with Mary, St Joseph and St Anne indicated the family's importance.[6]

Another important Christological trend was the existence of *ex-votos* painted in the eighteenth century, thanking Our Lord of Matosinhos for salvation from shipwrecks and healing from illnesses. This cult was taken by Portuguese sailors from North Portugal, and reached its peak in Brazil with the construction of the Sanctuary at Congonhas, Minas Gerais, between 1757 and 1875 [Fig. 1.2].[7]

Still at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the English traveller Gilbert Farquhar Mathison marvelled at the habit of the farmer Joaquim das Lavrinhas, of Cantagalo in Rio de Janeiro State, of kneeling with all those around him, both morning and night before a portable altar in the main room, to ask for God's blessing and the protection of the Virgin Mary.[8]

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5   Luccock J., *Notes on Rio de Janeiro, and the Southern parts of Brazil: taken during a residence of ten years in that country, from 1808 to 1818* (London: 1820) 445.

6   Branco M.A.H.S.C., "Oratórios Mineiros D. José I: O tema cristológico nos objetos de devoção familiar produzidos entre o fim do século XVIII e início do XIX", in *Atas do IV Congresso Internacional do Barroco Ibero - Americano* (Belo Horizonte: 2008) 1056–1061, 1059.

7   The designation *ex-votos* applies to two sorts of objects for private devotion. It refers to images made of wood, clay or wax representing parts of the body whose healing was attributed to a special devotion to Christ, or to the Virgin Mary, or to a saint. It also applies to the small paintings on wood, called *tabuletas* in Brazil, depicting a miraculous cure, or salvation from a shipwreck, an accident or during a battle. For these reasons, they were also known as *milagres*. On painted *ex-votos* given to Our Lord of Matosinhos in thanks for healing and for salvation from shipwrecks, see Cunha M.S., *Estórias de dor esperança e festa: o Brasil em ex-votos Portugueses* (século XVII–XIX) (Lisbon: 1998); Scarano J., *Fé e milagre: ex-votos pintados em madeira: séculos XVIII e XIX* (São Paulo: 2004).

8   Mathison G.F., *Narrative of a Visit to Brazil, Chile, Peru and the Sandwich Islands During the Years 1821 and 1822. With miscellaneous Remarks on the Past and Present State, and Political Prospects of Those Countries* (London: 1825) 105–107.

FIGURE 1.2   Ricardo André Frantz, *Ex-voto expressing the gratitude of a healed pearson to the Bom Jesus de Matosinhos*, 1832, Santuário de Congonhas, Minas Gerais
HTTPS://COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:EX-VOTO_-_SANTU%C3
%A1RIO_DE_CONGONHAS_-_S%C3%A9CULO_XIX.JPG. CONSULTED ON THE
12TH JULY 2016

Underlying the importance of the Marian cult in Brazil is the special cult dedicated to the Virgin Mary, dating from the foundation of Portugal, and which grew with the expansion of the Portuguese Empire. The latter aspect was exemplified by the Brazilian Marian cult of Nossa Senhora da Aparecida, patroness of Brazil, and whose cult dates to 1717 – when some fishermen in Paraiba were finally blessed with an abundant catch after an image of the Immaculate Conception fell into their nets.

The affectionate, intimate relationship Brazilians had with the Virgin Mary began at the moment of their initiation as Catholics, as thousands of Brazilians were given the Holy Virgin as Godmother. That relation was given sacramental force by putting a crown or a royal stick on the head of the baptized child.[9]

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9   Mott, "Cotidiano e vivência religiosa" 185.

In Brazil Marian devotion was particularly popular among women. Frei Agostinho de Santa Maria wrote in the *Santuário Mariano* that the mantle of Nossa Senhora do Parto (*Our Madonna of Parturition*) of the Cathedral of Bahia had special powers over complicated births.[10]

At the time, the custom was for people to be born at home. All over Brazil an image of Our Lady of Parturition was placed by the beds of women giving birth, and a Marian crown was placed on the child's head at baptism.[11] The success of this devotion may be explained by the high mortality rate among parturient women and newborn babies.

Interiors and domestic religious rituals reflected the devotions of the main orders – Jesuits, Franciscans, Carmelites and Benedictines – at the local level. In particular, St Francis Xavier ranked among the more venerated saints and members of the orders. This prominence can be explained not only by the fact that Francis Xavier was the most distinguished Early Modern missionary, but also by the leading role played by the Society of Jesus in Brazil, in terms both of geographical spread and of numbers. The Jesuits were the largest group of missionaries in Brazil, and were spread over a greater area than all other Catholic orders. They were, moreover, the first Catholic order to establish itself on a permanent basis upon arrival in Brazil in 1549.

The cult of the Franciscan St Anthony of Lisbon deserves special mention as well. The intercession of this saint, known affectionately in Brazil by the diminutive Sant'Antoninho, was popularized through figurines that were hung around the wearer's neck. As in Portugal, so in Brazil prayers to Sant'Antoninho seemed particularly effective in romantic encounters and marriages, and for finding lost objects. However, his intercession was also sought in all sorts of tribulations. Specific to Brazil was the saint's reputation as someone who helped slaveholders to find escaped slaves.[12]

Nuno Marques Pereira observed enthusiastically that a black captive called Manoel had an altar with images of Christ, Our Lady of the Rosary, and other saints at home. I suggest that Manoel was probably a member of a confraternity or brotherhood of the rosary. He and his family sang the rosary every day. Then, we read in the same account that Manoel had the first vote in the

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10   Santa Maria Agostinho de, *Santuario Mariano, e Historia das Image[n]s milagrosas de Nossa Senhora, e das milagrosamente apparecidas, em graça dos Prègadores, & dos devotos da mesma Senhora*, 20 vols. (Lisbon, Na Officina de Antonio Pedroso Galrão: 1707–1723; reprint, Lisbon: 1933) vol. 9, 9–11.

11   Vianna H., *A Bahia já foi assim* (crônicas de Costumes) (São Salvador da Bahia: 1973) 19–20.

12   Mott, "Cotidiano e vivência religiosa" 187–189.

elections of the confraternities and brotherhoods, due to the zeal with which he served God and Our Lady of Rosary in the mother church.[13]

This observation introduces the next point: that Brazilian houses reflected the devotions and iconographies that were proper to the third orders and that were related to the affirmation of Afro-descendants in Brazilian society. The popularity of the black and *pardo* confraternities and brotherhoods who honoured black saints like St Benedict of Palermo, St Iphigenia or St Elesban, constitutes an expression of social mobility among members of Afro-descendant communities in the Iberian world in the eighteenth century [Fig. 1.3].[14] According to the researcher of Brazilian brotherhoods Caio César Boschi, these cults responded mainly to private needs. The black saints were cults of Afro-descendant people not only due to the affinity of skin colour and geographic origin, but also to similar life trajectories. The 'saints of the white people' would hardly understand the suffering of black slave people.[15]

3   The Role of Religion in the Definition of Domestic Space and Behaviour

In addition to the religious communities of friars and nuns who followed strict rules, we can trace an extremely radical form of austere religious experience, as exemplified by a number of cloistered communities of young women, the *beatas.* Unlike travelling *beatas* or missionaries, cloistered *beatas* lived with families or in *beatérios*, non-institutional communities of women.[16] This was the case of the two sisters Maria de Castro and Beatriz da Costa, who spent most of their lives in perpetual enclosure at their parents' home, weakening their bodies by continuous fasting, scourging themselves, and spending night and day in continuous prayer. We also know the stories of other young women who spent most of the day praying, at times crying in front of altars, and whose

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13   Pereira Nuno Marques, *Compendio narrativo do peregrino da America em que se tratam varios discursos Espirituaes, e moraes, com muitas advertencias, e documentos contra os abusos, que se achão introdusidos pela malicia diabolica no Estado do Brasil. Dedicado à Virgem da Vitória, emperatris do ceo, rainha do mundo, e Senhora da Piedade, Mãy de Deos*, 2 vols. (Lisbon, Officina de Manoel Fernandes da Costa, Impressor do Santo Officio: 1728; reprint, Lisbon: 1939) vol. 1, 152.

14   Rowe E., "Visualizing Black Sanctity in Early Modern Spanish Polychromic Sculpture", in Patton P.A. (ed.), *Envisioning Others: Race, Color, and the Visual in Iberia and Latin America* (Leiden – Boston: 2015) 65.

15   Boschi C.C., *Os leigos e o poder* (São Paulo: 1986) 26.

16   Almeida S.C.C., *O sexo devoto: normatização e resistência feminina no império português, XVI–XVIII*, Ph.D. dissertation (Universidade Federal de Pernambuco: 2006) 268–269.

FIGURE 1.3 Unknown artist, *Sculpture of Benedikt of Palermo*, painted wood, 18th century, Convento de Nossa Senhora do Amparo – São Sebastião, São Paulo
PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS: FREI RÓGER BRUNORIO, CONVENT OF SAINT ANTHONY, RIO DE JANIERO

contact with the outside world was limited to going to Mass. Several of them were distinguished with visions, which were more common among women than men.[17]

According to the contemporary conception of Catholicism, practices of penitence and of retreat were essential aspects of the life of both religious and lay people. Illustrating this acknowledged viewpoint, Francisco da Conceição, one of the most distinguished theologians in eighteenth-century Brazil, prescribed that the devotee should make one day's retreat each month, make an annual retreat of between eight and ten days, fast on Fridays and Saturdays, self-flagellate three times a week, and wear a cilice for two hours also three times a week.[18]

During the eighteenth century, the majority of the population of Brazil lived in small villages and isolated rural households, of which the most characteristic were the *fazendas* and the *engenhos*. Whereas the *fazendas* could have a variety of economic functions – agricultural manufacturing and fishery – the *engenhos* were dedicated solely to the production of sugar. The latter were the most apparent element of the Sugar Cycle.[19] This rural lifestyle meant that even ceremonies and events that were customarily public were, in colonial Brazil, for the most part celebrated within a smaller circle of people. In addition to the spread of the celebration of domestic Mass, such religious highpoints of the Catholic calendar as Christmas or Easter involved setting up altars, and organizing processions, religious theatres, musical performances, dances and

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17   Algranti L.M., "A hagiografia e o ideal de santidade feminina: o impacto da leitura de vidas de santos nos conventos do Brasil colonial", in Silva M.B.N. (ed.), *De Cabral a D. Pedro: Aspectos da Colonização Portuguesa no Brasil* (Oporto: 2001) 171.

18   Conceição Francisco da, *Director instruído ou breve resumo de mística teologia para instrução dos directores* (Coimbra, Na Real Imprensa da Universidade: 1779) 465.

19   The term Sugar Cycle designates the period of the history of Colonial Brazil running essentially between the middle of the sixteenth and the middle or the end of the seventeenth century, according to the different authors. This designation derives from the fact that sugar was the main product of colonial Brazil, in particular of Bahia and Pernambuco, during this period. The Sugar Cycle was followed by a period coined the Gold Cycle. The later was the period in Brazilian colonial history marked by the exploration of gold and precious stones, chiefly in Minas Gerais state. This period, which began with the discovery of the mines in Taubaté in the 1690s, reached its peak in the 1750s and 1760s and lasted until around 1785, with the start of the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain. (Baer W., *A economia brasileira* (S. Paulo: 2009³) 356; Eisenberg P.B., *The Sugar Industry in Pernambuco: Modernization Without Change, 1840–1910* (Berkeley 1974) 4; Russell-Wood, A.J.R., "The Gold Cycle, c. 1690–1750", in Bethell L. (ed.), *Colonial Brazil* (Cambridge et al.: 1987) 190–243.

balls of slaves or indigenous people, either in the houses or in front of them.[20] Furthermore, during the laying of the cornerstone of a wealthy house the stone was blessed with holy water, and important dates in the annual calendar were marked by religious rituals. For instance, a priest blessed the *engenhos* on the first day of the grinding of sugar cane, the so-called *botada*.[21]

This domestication of ritual obviously had important effects on the use of space. From the seventeenth century onwards it became fashionable to build private chapels, either attached to houses or in separate buildings, inspired by the *solares* of noblemen in Portugal, also built from the seventeenth century onwards [Fig. 1.4].[22] In rural Brazil these chapels acquired special significance. They often symbolized the social discrimination that was prevalent since they allowed the elites to attend Mass at home, without having to mix with the rest of the population. We even know of chapels surrounded by steps and lattices assuring the seclusion of the worshippers at Mass.

By contrast, however, some domestic chapels were attached to verandas or located on them. These chapels allowed all members of the household, including servants and slaves, as well as visitors, to participate in religious ceremonies. Mass and other collective rituals could be also celebrated in front of simple altars placed on verandas and in other communal areas such as living rooms and entrance halls. Some wealthier households also had a 'saints' room', which could range in size from a chamber or a small area for religious practice to a simple space beneath a staircase or in the basement.

Strong religiosity, a distinctive mark of many Brazilian households at the beginning of the eighteenth century, was expressed in the proliferation of a range of objects for private worship which surrounded inhabitants and visitors in the houses of good Catholics from morning till night. On waking up, the first things the faithful would see would be a small picture honouring Christ, Our Lady or a saint that hung on the wall, a rosary and a crucifix on the bedhead.

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20   Silveira J. de S.J.Q. da, "Viagem e Visita do Sertão do Bispado do Gram Pará em 1762 e 1763", *Revista do Instituto Histórico Geográfico Brasileiro* 9 (1847) 43–106, 179–227, 328–375, 476–527, here 106; Souza L.M., "Formas provisórias de existência: a vida quotidiana nos caminhos, nas fronteiras e nas fortificações", in Novaes – Souza (eds.), *História da Vida Privada* 42–81, here 59.

21   Jancsó I., "A sedução da liberdade: cotidiano e contestação política no final do séc. XVIII", in Novaes – Souza (eds.), *História da Vida Privada* 388–437, here 416.

22   *Solar* means a large house or palace, generally built by a noble family, with its own chapel. In Portugal, *solares* were found mainly in the region of Entre Douro and Minho, the source of the oldest Portuguese aristocracy and an area that also accounted for most of the Portuguese emigrants to Brazil before and after independence was declared in 1822.

FIGURE 1.4   Fazenda of Acuã, Aparecida, Paraiba, second half of the 18th century
PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS: A. SILVA

The images, in particular *registos*,[23] crucifixes and even bowls of holy water in bedrooms were intended to protect their occupants while they slept and also remind them that death and disease often accompany sleep. This array of objects was complemented by lit votive lamps, images decorated and dressed by women, miraculous medals, scapulars and prayer books.

Communal areas, such as dining or living rooms, contained many pictures of the saints to whom the family was particularly devoted, crucifixes, and also small private altars on tables and dressers or niches with images in the walls. Saints were considered family members! Portraits of dead family members were often kept among the images of saints.

Some talismans accepted by the Church were kept in the saints' room. When a woman went into labour, if a rose of Jericho inside a glass of water opened quickly, this signified that the birth would go well, if the rose did not open this signified death. The blessed straw from Palm Sunday was a common object in the saints' room and was believed to protect the inhabitants of the house from lighting and tempests. Miraculous medals, scapulars and all sorts of religious books were likewise standard objects found in this room.

From the middle of the eighteenth century a fashion spread for small images and altars for individual use, around 10–20 cm in height, made from

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23   Small images for private worship representing a saint/special devotion or a miraculous episode, such as cures, healings and salvation from shipwrecks, and which were very popular in the Portuguese 'world' during the eighteenth century.

FIGURE 1.5
Unknown artist, *Portable Oratory of Saint Francis of Paula also called maquineta or lapinha*, Golden wood, 18th century, Convento de Santo António, Rio de Janeiro
PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS: FREI RÓGER BRUNORIO, CONVENT OF SAINT ANTHONY, RIO DE JANEIRO

FIGURE 1.6   *Ex-votos*, Igreja do Senhor do Bonfim, São Salvador da Bahia. Photo of the author, August 2012

soapstone or terracotta, since these could be transported easily by travellers. These altars, also known as *maquinetas* or *lapinhas*, were made in Minas Gerais State [Fig. 1.5].

The widespread Baroque sentimentalism that existed across the whole of Brazilian colonial society was also reflected in the domestic setting in the large quantity of relics of sacred and divine figures, such as fragments of bones or of the True Cross, and in the popularity of *ex-votos* [Fig. 1.6].[24]

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24   Mott, "Cotidiano e vivência religiosa" 164, 166–167.

4   Sacrilege at Home

An engraving depicting the interior of a farmer's family home by the German painter Johan Moritz Rugendas, who lived in Brazil from 1822 until 1825, gives an idea of how limited domestic privacy could be. Sharing the same room are a lady lying down, a musician, a priest and a number of slaves. One of the slaves announces the arrival of a visitor in the doorway.[25]

The same engraving also relates to the overlapping of functions, both religious and profane that prevailed among Brazilian family aggregates until the nineteenth century. This engraving is further useful to illustrate the fact that the great distances and sparse settlement meant strangers, including priests, were an almost constant presence in the Brazilian home. They often remained for extended periods.[26]

This led to all sorts of activities that were alien to correct Catholic practices, such as celebrating Mass and distributing the sacraments in domestic spaces using non-sacred liturgical objects. In particular, letting women make their confessions at home was considered especially dangerous, as this practice could facilitate the solicitation of sexual favours by clerics, a common sin in colonial Brazil, as can be read in the reports of the three Inquisition visitations which took place respectively between 1591 and 1593, 1618 and 1619, and 1750 and 1777.[27]

Daily life in colonial Brazil was marked by an intense social life, including receptions with banquets, concerts, and dances, and the playing of card games and table games such as backgammon and chess [Fig. 1.7]. Parties are, by definition, ideal moments for games of seduction and the excessive consumption of alcohol, and therefore posed a threat to discipline when parties were attended by clergymen. For this reason, in April 1780 D. Frei Domingos da Encarnação Pontével (1780–1793), the second Bishop of Minas Gerais, ordered the publication of the following notice in Vila Rica, the city of Ouro Preto:

> Como seja escandaloso e totalmente alheio do estado eclesiástico que pessoas adidas da Igreja se achem assistindo em ajuntamentos, e atos públicos em que se fazem representações profanas de imensuráveis

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25   Rugendas, Johan Moritz, *Família de Fazendeiros*, watercolour from ca. 1825, in Lima H.L. – Castro R.R., "O imaginário da cristandade no Rio de Janeiro do século XIX nas pinturas de Rugendas e Debret", *19 & 20* 4 (2009), http://www.dezenovevinte.net/obras/obras_cristandade.htm; accessed 8 July 2016.

26   Algranti L.M., "Famílias e Vida Doméstica", in Novaes – Souza (eds.), *História da Vida Privada* 83–154, here 87, 102.

27   Siqueira S.A., *A Inquisição Portuguesa e a Sociedade Colonial* (São Paulo: 1978) 55–56.

FIGURE 1.7   Augustus Earle, *Games During the Carnival at Rio de Janeiro*. Watercolour;
21.6 × 34 cm
SOURCE: NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA. HTTPS://COMMONS.WIKI
MEDIA.ORG/WIKI/FILE:GAMES_DURING_THE_CARNIVAL_AT_RIO_DE_
JANEIRO.JPG. CONSULTED ON THE 12TH JULY 2016

perigos, e que só servem [para] arruinar as almas, e mais fins funestos
que deles se seguem. Sendo nós informados que nessa Vila há casa em
que se fazem estes ajuntamentos e se representam semelhantes atos,
querendo de algum modo obviar a ruína assim espiritual como tem-
poral que se pode seguir aos nossos súditos [...] pelo que ordenamos
[...] a cada um dos eclesiásticos [...] que se abstenham de ir a semel-
hantes atos ainda estando [...] com o pretexto de tocarem instrumento,
cantarem.

How scandalous it is, and how totally alien to the ecclesiastical state that
persons associated with the Church should attend gatherings and pub-
lic events at which profane representations are made of immeasurable
danger, and which serve only to ruin souls, resulting in further nefarious
consequences. Being aware of the fact that in this town there is a house
in which these gatherings take place and in which similar acts are per-
formed, and wishing in some way to obviate both the spiritual and tem-
poral ruin which our subjects could incur [...] we therefore order [...] all

priests [...] to refrain from attending such events even [...] with the pretext of playing a musical instrument or singing.[28]

A common sacrilegious practice was the disrespectful use of sacred objects of worship. However, the possession of devotional items could in itself illustrate the intent to expiate one's sins. Profits obtained from war or from the exploitation and slavery of both Indians and Africans and Afro-descendants were often used to fund art and objects *Dei laudem* as a means of expiating one's sinful actions.

Sacrilege took the form of a series of practices which consisted of an overly personalized view of worship and which were therefore condemned by the Church authorities. Frei Agostinho de Santa Maria complained about the custom among devout women of plucking the infant Jesus from the arms of sculptures of St Anthony or of removing the saint's halo. The women only returned the infant Jesus and the halo after obtaining a miracle.[29] When St Anthony or St Gonzalo did not fulfil the wish of the devotee, their images were put inside a well as punishment.[30]

Another widespread practice, which was equally unacceptable to the Catholic authorities, was the custom of carrying or holding onto consecrated hosts, removed from the mouth at Easter communion, as a protection against the great probability of a sudden violent death.[31]

However, the sin was even greater when objects intended for Catholic worship were used for sacrilegious purposes. This seems to have been the case of Maria Carvalha, an inhabitant of recife. In 1762 she was denounced to the Inquisition for allegedly having permitted her daughters to imitate the celebration of Mass before an altar in her home. A number of years later, at the beginning of the 1770s, it was said that the *mulata* woman Ana Jorge, an inhabitant of Mariana, committed the terrible sacrilege of placing images of the saints under her bed before trysts with her lovers.[32] In Minas Gerais, as in Lisbon, prayers were dedicated to the milk of Our Lady, which was often in powdered form, and considered to be a powerful instrument against the traps of the devil. As is still the case today, acts of aggression against, and profanation of sacred

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28   "Edital de D. Frei Domingos da Encarnação Pontével em Abril de 1789", in Oliveira A.C., "A difusão da doutrina católica em minas gerais no século XVIII: análise das pastorais dos bispos", *História: Questões & Debates* 36 (2002) 189–217, here 198.

29   Santa Maria Agostinho de, *Santuario Mariano* vol. 10, 9–10.

30   Del Priore M., "Ritos da vida privada", in Novais – Souza (eds.), *História da Vida Privada no Brasil* 275–330, here 315.

31   Silva B.N., *Cultura e Sociedade no Rio de Janeiro (1808–1821)* (São Paulo: 1977) 333.

32   Mott, "Cotidiano e vivência religiosa" 167, 190.

images – including spitting on them, beating or burning them, throwing faeces at them and urinating on them – were regarded as especially heinous.[33]

5   Religious Syncretism and Heresy in the Domestic Context

Heresy can be defined as a belief and religious practice that sharply contradict established religion. As concerns colonial Brazil, non-Catholic practices were mainly related to the presence of New Christians, as well as to the Indian and African communities.

In Portugal, the forced conversion of local Sephardic Jews was ordered by King D. Manuel I in 1497. A decree dated 25 May 1773 and issued by King D. José abolished the distinction between New Christians and Old Christians in the Portuguese Empire. This document officially ended a long period of 275 years of religious and social persecution of the community of New Christians who had moved to Brazil after the arrival of the first Portuguese settlers. Gaspar da Gama, who arrived with the fleet of Pedro Álvares Cabral, is the first known New Christian to arrive in this area. He was immediately followed by many other New Christians, who undertook all sorts of activities, from business to agriculture. Some even entered the priesthood to prove they were not of Jewish blood.

In colonial Brazil, Jewish rituals were the main form of heresy, as evidenced by the fact that they were registered in half of the trials of the Inquisition. Of the 550 inventories of the property of New Christians from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries studied by Isabel Drummond Braga, just 92, or 16.7%, included objects for Catholic worship. All of the rosaries were made from precious materials, indicating that they were more collectors' pieces than items for worship![34]

Within the Portuguese area of influence, including Brazil, the Jewish religious-cultural heritage always remained alive. In addition to Jews coming from other European countries, who were attracted by the possibilities of enrichment in Brazil, the permanence of Jewish culture must be mainly attributed to members of the New Christian community, the Catholics who had been – or whose ancestors had been – Jews.

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33   Mott L., *Sexo Proibido, Virgens, gays e escravos nas garras da Inquisição* (Campinas: 1989) 174.

34   Braga I.M.R.M.D., *Bens de Hereges: inquisição e cultura material Portugal e Brasil* (*séculos XVII–XVIII*) (Coimbra: 2012).

Religious dualism was typical of New Christians. In public, members of this community sought to present themselves as faithful followers of Christ and Christianity. At home, they maintained Jewish customs, namely, they observed the Sabbath and other Jewish festivities and holidays, and even said Christian prayers in a different way. In the *In Genere* session of the *autos-da-fé* of the Inquisition [a specific ritual of public presentation by penitents and those condemned by the Inquisition in the Iberian context], the accused were not just asked whether they observed religious holidays, but also if they ended the Our Father without saying Jesus' name, or the psalms of David without the *Gloria Patri*.[35]

Between 1703 and 1740, 325 New Christians born or living in Rio de Janeiro were arrested, of whom 167 were women and 158 were men. The need to hide their religion meant that their homes became the preferred location for the concealed practice of Jewish rituals, which were transmitted essentially by women.[36] The male population was mobile and unstable, being made up of merchants, soldiers and men attracted by the allure of prospecting for gold or precious stones. Thus, the women often headed the household.[37]

The trials of the Inquisition abound with references to magic practices such as superstition, divination, or prayers with affective intentions. For this reason, such forbidden practices mainly occurred indoors. On their arrival in Brazil, the Portuguese sought to combat local rituals performed mainly by the *pajés*, quacks credited with supernatural powers over nature and believed to be in direct contact with terrible demons among Brazilian indigenous population. Nevertheless, the *pajés* continued their activities.

As had already occurred with the indigenous population, African slaves were also prohibited by the Portuguese from celebrating their traditional rituals. However, these prohibitions had few practical effects. The sin of heresy was a very real threat in a context marked by the constant juxtaposition of the supernatural world on the natural world. Magic and witchcraft were

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35   Silva L.G.F., *Heréticos e impuros: a inquisição e os cristãos-novos no Rio de Janeiro: século XVIII* (Rio de Janeiro: 1995) 113.

36   Gorenstein L., "Cristãos-novos, identidade e Inquisição", *WebMosaica revista do instituto cultural judaico Marc Chagall* 4, 1 (2012) 40–49, here 47. For a more general account of this topic from the perspective of the Iberian Empires, see Gillitz D., *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jew*s (Albuquerque: 2002).

37   Almeida S.C.C., *O sexo devoto* 61–62.

frequently the last means available for ascribing meaning to the unknown and the inexplicable.[38]

The highly miscegenated population of Brazil, recently catechized into the Roman Catholic Church and/or living at a distance from Church authorities, instead of adopting Catholic devotions and rituals and forgetting or deserting their own, followed both new and old, exaggerating the points of resemblance between the two. At times, they created new saints out of elements of the two religious traditions, mestizo saints.

Among the most popular objects of worship from Africa were *mandingas* or *patuás*, small bags from Mali which were used to carry verses from the Koran. Over time, these bags were also used to carry objects of Catholic worship such as consecrated hosts, stones from altars or pieces of paper with prayers in honour of St Mark and St Cyprian. These objects were credited with special powers to protect their owner from enemies and ferocious animals, as well as powers to further the owner's interests.[39]

These pouches also show that, over time, contact between the various separate imaginaries present in Brazil created a distinct cultural memory, both among the colonized people and among the colonizers. This process of syncretism continued in the face of opposition from the authorities. The *calundus*, syncretic and collective rituals involving music and dance, were the object of condemnation and interdiction, though these interdictions had little success. This ritual was generally believed to bring cures for physical and mental diseases and to help find lost objects and identify criminals, or to bring good luck in hunting, agriculture and in professional life in general.[40]

6   Conclusions

In conclusion, the eighteenth century was decisive in establishing Catholicism in Brazil, as shown by the houses and dwellings of the most virtuous Catholics. Among them, we note the *beatas* and families who performed religious rituals throughout the day. The profound religiosity of many families also had a

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38   Reis M.V., "Os diversos mundos das práticas mágico-religiosas a partir das visitações do Santo Ofício à América Portuguesa (1591–1599; 1763–1769)", *Revista Ultramares Dossiê Inquisição Colonial* 71 (2015) 34–60, here 47.

39   Calainho D.B., *Metrópole das Mandingas: religiosidade negra e inquisição portuguesa no Antigo Regime* (Rio de Janeiro: 2000) 153.

40   Daibert R., "A religião dos bantos: novas leituras sobre o calundu no Brasil colonial", *Revista Estudos Históricos* 28 (2015) 7–25, here 16–17.

significant impact in terms of space – consider the saints' rooms and the private chapels – leading to the collection of a wide range of objects for devotional use. However, sin was also to be found in many houses. Daily routines and domestic interiors were replete with sacrilegious practices. This period saw an increase in syncretism, at times verging on heresy, in particular due to the ancestral presence of elements of Judaism and of indigenous religions and the Massive influx of African slaves.

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When the Home Becomes a Shrine: Public Prayers in Private Houses among the Ottoman Jews

Dotan Arad

Prayer* is a human phenomenon with a dual nature: on the one hand it is an intimate experience, a private meeting between an individual and God. On the other hand it is a collective event – a gathering of the entire community, to sing and pray together. Every religion has to deal with this tension between the two facets of prayer.

Every kind of prayer has its own place. Intimate prayer is usually performed in a private space, inside the walls of the home. Collective prayer, by contrast, is performed in a public place: in Jewish practice, this occurs mainly in the synagogue, but sometimes in other public spaces. For example, in a time of a drought, says the Mishna (the earliest codex of oral Jewish law, edited around 220 CE), prayer must be performed in the town square.[1]

The separation between public space – the synagogue – and private space – the home – can be somewhat blurred. A person can pray alone in the synagogue, but a congregation can also pray in a private house. In this article, I will discuss communal prayers in private houses among the Jews in the Ottoman Empire. What were the circumstances for this phenomenon? And what were its implications?

1 Private Prayer and Communal Prayer in Judaism

The Bible is full of examples of figures engaged in intimate prayer, including Abraham, Moses, Hannah, and David.[2] A touching biblical representation of private prayer in a private space is the supplication of King Hezekiah, who was

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1 Mishna Ta'anit 2:1.

2 For bibliography on prayer in the biblical period, see Tabory J., *Jewish Prayer and the Yearly Cycle – A List of Articles* [*Kiryat Sefer*, Supplement to Volume 64] (Jerusalem: 1992–1993) 64–65. See also Reif S.C., *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer* (Cambridge: 1993) 22–52.

sick and heard from the prophet that he was going to die. Lying on his bed, he prayed and asked for his life: 'Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord […] And Hezekiah wept sore'.[3] However, when the sages of the Mishnah and the Talmud came to shape rabbinic Judaism, they gave clear priority to communal prayer.[4] Many sermons in rabbinic literature praise the value of collective prayer. Moreover, according to Jewish law, there are several parts of prayer that can only be recited in the presence of ten men who are above the age of thirteen. The following texts are the most important in Jewish prayer: the Kaddish, the Kedushah, the calling 'bless the Lord, the blessed one', and reading from the Torah scroll.

The sages gave clear priority to reciting prayer in the synagogue. The Talmud says: אין תפילתו של אדם נשמעת אלא בבית הכנסת ('A man's prayer is heard [by God] only in the synagogue').[5] The ideal prayer, therefore, according to Jewish law, is one recited by a gathering of ten adult males in a synagogue. Maimonides (1138–1204) included those conditions in Mishneh Torah, one of the central codices of Halacha (Jewish law), which was written in Egypt in the twelfth century:

> Communal prayer is always heard. Even when there are transgressors among [the congregation], the Holy One, blessed be He, does not reject group prayer. Therefore, a person should include himself in the community and should not pray alone whenever he is able to pray with the community. One should always spend the early morning and evening [hours] in the synagogue, for prayer will not be heard at all times except [when recited] in the synagogue. Anyone who has a synagogue in his city and does not pray [together] with the congregation in it is called a bad neighbour.[6]

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3 Isaiah 38:2–3.

4 See, for example, Millgram A.E., *Jewish Worship* (Philadelphia: 1971) 29–32.

5 *Babylonian Talmud*, Berakhot 6a.

6 Maimonides, *Mishne Torah*, Laws of Prayer 8:1. Nevertheless, some pious groups acknowledged the legitimacy of private prayer, and even gave it, in some circumstances, priority over public prayer. See for example Russ-Fishbane's description of the pious Jewish circle in Egypt in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: 'Among the most intriguing developments of Egyptian pietism is the value attached to individual prayer over and above that of communal prayer in the synagogue', Russ-Fishbane E., *Judaism, Sufism, and the Pietists of Medieval Egypt* (Oxford: 2015) 109; see also his discussion ibid. 108–122.

2   Communal Prayer in Private Homes: the Case of Ottoman Jewry

Synagogues in private ownership were very common among the Jews of the Ottoman Empire. The existence of such synagogues is well documented from all over the Empire.[7] What was the background for this phenomenon?

Ottoman Jewry in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was a multicultural society. The Jewish population was divided into natives and immigrants. The native Jews were composed of two main groups: Romaniotes, Greek speakers, who lived in the areas which had previously belonged to the Byzantine Empire,[8] and Musta'ribs, Arabic speakers, who lived in the areas which had previously belonged to the Mamluk state.[9] Both groups contained Rabbinic Jews and Karaite Jews (Rabbinic Jews, or Rabbanites, accepted both the Bible and the Oral law. Karaite Jews accepted only the Bible as legal source). Immigrants made up the second element in Jewish society. This period was characterized by continual Jewish immigration to this region, mainly from the Iberian Peninsula, but also from other lands, like Germany, Italy and North Africa.

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7   See for example: R. Jacob Berav, *She'elot u-Teshuvot* (Venice, Andrea Morisoni: 1663) §5 [Famagusta]; R. Joseph Karo, *Avqat Rokhel* (Salonica, Mordechai, David and Naḥman Israelicha: 1791) §122 [Damascus]; R. Mordechai ha-Levi, *Darke No'am: She'elot u-Teshuvot* (Venice, Vincenzo and Aluise Bragadin: 1697), *Even ha-'Ezer* §16 [Alexandria]; R. Ḥayim Benveniste, *Ba'e Ḥaye, Ḥoshen Mishpat* (Salonica, Mordechai, David and Naḥman Israelicha: 1788–1791) I, §34 [Izmir]; R. Abraham ha-Levi, *Ginat Veradim* (Istanbul, Jonah b. Jacob of Zaloshitz [Działoszyce]: 1715–1717), *Yoreh De'ah* #3,1 [Hebron].

8   On the Romaniotes, see Bowman S.B., "Survival in Decline: Romaniote Jewry post-1204", in Bonfil R. – Irshai O. – Stroumsa G.G. – Talgam R. (eds.), *Jews in Byzantium: Dialectics of Minority and Majority Cultures* (Leiden – Boston: 2012) 101–132; Hollender E., "Mahzor Romania and the Judeo-Greek Hymn ἔνας ὁ κύριος: Introduction, Critical Edition, and Commentary", *Revue des Études Juives* 170 (2011) 117–171; Rozen M., *A History of the Jewish Community in Istanbul: The Formative Years, 1453–1566* (Leiden – Boston: 2002) 45, 47, 55–60, 64–77.

9   On the Musta'ribs, see Rozen M., "The Position of the Musta'rabs in the Inter-Community Relationships in Eretz Israel from the 15th Century to the End of the 17th Century", *Cathedra* 17 (1980) 73–101 (Heb.); Hacker J.R., "On the Character of the Cairo Mustaarib Community Leadership at the End of the Sixteenth Century", in. Hacker J.R. – Harel Y. (eds.), *The Scepter Shall not Depart from Judah: Leadership, Rabbinate and Community in Jewish History, Studies Presented to Professor Simon Schwarzfuchs* (Jerusalem: 2011) 89–100 (Heb.); Arad D., *The Musta'rib Jews in Syria, Palestine and Egypt, 1330–1700*, Ph.D. dissertation (Hebrew University of Jerusalem: 2013) (Heb.); Arad D., "'A Clearly Distinguished Community': The Musta'ribs in Damascus in the Sixteenth Century", in Harel Y. (ed.), *The Jews of Syria: History, Culture and Identity* (Jerusalem: 2015) 95–130 (Heb.); Arad D., "Welfare and Charity in a Sixteenth-Century Jewish Community in Egypt: A Study of Genizah Documents", *Al-Masāq: Journal of the Medieval Mediterranean* 29 (2017) 258–272.

The various immigrant groups tried to preserve their separate identities by founding independent frameworks, which were called *Qahal* ('congregation, community' in Hebrew). Every *Qahal* had its own leadership and its own institutions.[10] The main institution in the communal life of the *Qahal* was the synagogue.[11] It was not just a place of worship, but was also a social centre. All the public activities of the *Qahal* were held in it. Discussions of the communal court, deliberations of the leaders, communal meetings, all took place within the synagogue. The centrality of the synagogue in the social life of the *Qahal* is reflected in the fact that in Ladino, the Judeo-Spanish dialect, the word '*Kal*', i.e. *Qahal*, has two meanings: 'a communal framework' and 'a synagogue'.

Most of the synagogues which were established by the Jewish immigrants in the Ottoman Empire were not located in separate public buildings, but rather in houses in a crowded yard, sharing common walls and a common yard with many neighbours, both Jews and non-Jews.[12] Some of the houses were

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10 On the Qahal and its institutions, see Shaw S.J., *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic* (London: 1992) 48–77; Hacker J.R., "The Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire in the Sixteenth Century", in Beinart H. (ed.), *Moreshet Sepharad: The Sephardi Legacy* (Jerusalem: 1992) vol. 2, 118–125; Barnai J., "The Development of Community Organizational Structure: The Case of Izmir", in Levy A. (ed.), *Jews, Turks, Ottomans* (Syracuse: 2002) 35–51, 296–300; Ben-Naeh Y., *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans: Ottoman Jewish Society in the Seventeenth Century* (Tübingen: 2008) 163–217.

11 On the synagogues in the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Hovav Y., *Demuto ha-Ḥevratit ve-ha-Irgunit shel bet ha-Keneset be-Anatolyia vu-va-Balqan, 1550–1650*, MA Dissertation (Hebrew University of Jerusalem: 1987); Goldman I.M., *The Life and Times of Rabbi David Ibn Abi Zimra* (New York: 1970) 102–106; Shaw, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire* 66–71; Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans* 218–236. For an architectural description of the synagogues in the Islamic lands, see Cassuto D., "Synagogues in the Islamic World", in *Encyclopedia of Jews in the Islamic World* (Leiden – Boston: 2010), IV, 423–432. On the material culture of the Synagogues, mainly in Turkey, see Juhasz E., "Synagogues", in Juhasz E. (ed.), *Sefardi Jews in the Ottoman Empire: Aspects of Material Culture* (Jerusalem: 1990) 36–59.

12 On communal prayers in private houses among the Ottoman Jews, see Cohen A., *Jewish Life under Islam: Jerusalem in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1984) 84–86; Hovav, *Demuto ha-Ḥevratit ve-ha-Irgunit* 20–26; Rozen M., *The Jewish Community of Jerusalem in the Seventeenth Century* (Tel Aviv: 1984) 191–192 (Heb.); Hacker J.R., "Communal Organization among the Jewish communities of the Ottoman Empire (1453–1676)", in Grossman A. – Kaplan Y. (eds.), *Kehal Yisrael: Jewish Self-Rule Through the Ages* (Jerusalem: 1980) vol. 2, 301–303 (Heb.); Ben-Naeh, *Jews in the Realm of the Sultans* 218–221; Ben-Naeh Y., "Ḥibat Ṣiyon 'al ha-Bosphorus", *Et-Mol* 176 (2004) 28–29 (Heb.); Ben-Naeh Y., "Alliyah of a Grandee from Istanbul: Ya'akov Elnekave in Jerusalem", *Cathedra* 144 (2012) 21–34 (Heb.). The phenomenon is well documented in the Responsa literature; see, for example, R. Samuel de Medina, *She'elot u-Teshuvot*, I, (Salonica, Joseph Abraham Bathsheba: 1594), *Yoreh de'ah* §99.

bestowed upon the community, while others remained under completely private ownership and were rented to the community.

The main reason for this phenomenon was the policy of local Muslim rulers. In the first decades of the Ottoman conquest, the rulers gave relative religious freedom to their Christian and Jewish subjects. The authorities did not damage their houses of worship and gave them permission to build new ones. But in the time of Sultan Bayezid II (1481–1512), the situation changed dramatically. It was forbidden to build new churches and synagogues, and those built in the time of Sultan Mehmed II (1444–1446, 1451–1481) were closed.[13] They were opened again only in the period of Sultan Selim (1512–1520).

After the reign of Bayezid, conditions improved, but it was still prohibited to establish new synagogues. The Sultans adopted the *Shar'ī* law which permitted non-Muslims to keep those houses of worship which had preceded the Muslim conquest, but prohibited the building of new ones. For example, in October 1540 Sultan Suleiman I (1520–1566) sent an order to the governor of Damascus, which prohibited the building of new synagogues but gave permission to the 'old' synagogues to continue their activities.[14] In November 1584 another order was sent from the palace in Istanbul to the governor of Damascus, citing a complaint of the *Qaḍi* (Muslim judge) of Safed (in Galilee). The *Qaḍi* claimed that the Jews in his city had built new synagogues, and the Sultan ordered the governor to investigate the matter.[15]

During the Ottoman period public synagogues were subjected to constant danger. When it was discovered that a synagogue was not as old as the Jews claimed, the synagogue was then damaged by the authorities. For example, an old synagogue in Cairo was closed in 1545,[16] and a synagogue in Jerusalem was also closed in 1588.[17] Some synagogues were demolished, such as the old

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13   On the policy of Sultan Bayezid II towards the Jews and its implications on the synagogues, see Epstein M.A., *The Ottoman Jewish Communities and their Role in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Freiburg: 1980), 29–31, 50; Hacker J.R., "The Background and the Implications of Avraham Ben Eliezer Ha-Levi's 'Megilat Setarim'", *Shalem* 8 (2008) 471–473 (Heb.).

14   Cohen A. – Simon-Pikali E., *Jews in the Moslem Religious Court: Society, Economy and Communal Organization in the XVIth Century, Documents from Ottoman Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: 1993) 73–74 (Heb.).

15   Heyd U., *Ottoman Documents on Palestine 1552–1615: A Study of the Firman according to the Mühimme Defteri* (Oxford: 1960) 169.

16   Shtober S. (ed.), *Sefer Divrey Yosef by Yosef ben Yitzhak Sambari: Eleven Hundred Years of Jewish History Under Muslim Rule* (Jerusalem: 1994) 412–414 (Heb.).

17   Heyd, *Ottoman Documents on Palestine* 167–169; Cohen – Simon-Pikali, *Jews in the Moslem Religious Court* 70–88. The synagogue suffered harassment also in the Mamluk period,

synagogue of Damascus, which was destroyed in 1552.[18] Others were expropriated and became mosques.

This juridical condition remained without change until the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Ottomans started to make deep reforms in the administration and in the law. Those reforms, known as *Tanzimat*, gave equal rights to Christian and Jewish subjects of the Ottoman Empire, and as a result, allowed them to build houses of worship.

3   Strategies for Coping with the Rules

How did the Jews cope with the intolerance of the governors towards their prayer houses? A responsum of R. Jacob ibn Ḥabib (d. 1516), an exile from Spain who settled in Salonica and is known as the author of *'En Ya'aqov*, (an anthology of the Talmud's legends), gives us important information on the Jewish reaction to this policy. Ibn Ḥabib described that in the beginning of the sixteenth century:

> The synagogues where we are praying in the Turkish kingdom are inside the yards […] Our residence in their houses and yards is temporary […] In this time, under this kingdom, we have no permission to dedicate a house permanently for a synagogue, and all the more, so we do not have permission to build one. We need to hide ourselves under the ground, and 'her voice could not be heard' (1 Samuel 1:13) because of the danger. Therefore, even if there is a residential house above the house of prayer, there is no need to protest about it, just to keep the house above clean.[19]

In this source, Ibn Ḥabib describes two strategies the Ottoman Jews used in order to hide their places of prayer from the authorities: building a synagogue underground, and locating it in a private residence.

Immigrants were particularly affected by the legal restrictions on building new synagogues. While native Jews had their old synagogues, the immigrants

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       and in 1474 was demolished; see Little D.P., "Communal Strife in Late Mamlūk Jerusalem", *Islamic Law and Society* 6, 1 (1999) 69–96, esp. 78–87.

18   Avishur Y., "A Judeo Arabic Elegy on the Destruction of the Synagogue and the Riots in the Jewish Community of Damascus, 1553", *Ben 'Ever La-'Arav* 4 (2008) 98–104 (Heb.); Arad D., "Destruction and Memory: The Destruction of the Synagogue in Damascus and its Shaping of its remembrance in the Collective Memory", *Zion* 81 (2016) 67–94 (Heb.).

19   Cited in R. Joseph Caro, *Bet Yoseph, on Tur Oraḥ Ḥayim* (Venice, Marco Antonio Giustiniani: 1550) §154; Hacker, Avraham Ben Eliezer Ha-Levi's 'Megilat Setarim' 472.

did not have buildings for their public prayers and lacked the permission to build new synagogues.

The different Jewish groups in the Ottoman Empire had different liturgical customs. The immigrants wanted to keep their liturgical tradition and therefore preferred to establish new synagogues, rather than joining an existing local one. Their synagogue functioned for them, not only as an institution for preserving their old tradition, but also as a framework for self-determination. It was a place for meeting other Jews from their place of origin, and the main arena for the processes of social bonding between the immigrants. However, there were also synagogues in private homes among the native Jews. The growth of the population necessitated the construction of new synagogues for the natives as well, and some of these new prayer spaces were established in private homes.

Although the main reason for conducting public prayer in private houses was the legal reason (the ban on the construction of newer synagogues), there was also an economic reason for housing a synagogue in a private home. Building a new house, or renting one, and maintaining its activity was a heavy burden on the treasury of the *Qahal*. An easy solution was to arrange the prayers in a private house.

A combination of several factors therefore contributed to the high number of private houses which functioned as prayer spaces among the Ottoman Jews.

4   Private Synagogues and the Muslim Authorities

Despite the financial difficulty described above, in some cases the *Qahal* succeeded in raising enough money to construct a new building for prayer. This step was dangerous. These new synagogues never got official approval from the authorities and their existence, as mentioned above, was under continuous threat. This instability is portrayed in a case from Istanbul in the sixteenth century. The Cordova *Qahal*, that is to say the community of immigrants from Cordova in the Ottoman capital, rented land and built a synagogue. A conflict then arose about the ownership, which was brought before the Muslim court. One of the litigants told the *Qaḍi* that the Jews had built a synagogue on that land, and the Judge 'boiled with anger and said':

> 'Who is he that dared to do so?!',[20] and said this house must be destroyed. Immediately the people of the *Qahal* were galvanized and cleared out

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20   Following Esther 7:5.

the synagogue and took out all the Torah scrolls and the (oil) lamps, and they redesigned the space as a residence, and did not go to pray there for a long time.[21]

A similar case occurred in Jerusalem. The Jews established a prayer site in a private apartment and were subjected to threats and extortion. They sent a messenger to the Sultan's palace in Istanbul to lobby him in order to defend the new synagogue and as a result, in December 1581, Sultan Murad III (1574–1595) wrote a letter to the *Qaḍi* of Jerusalem and commanded him as follows:

> To the *Qaḍi* of Jerusalem: The Jews of Jerusalem recently sent a man to my exalted gate and announced: According to our ritual, we gathered in one house, we worshiped God and read the Torah […] Some people decided to hurt us and to harass us, with no reason, just to steal money and attain benefits. I command that when my decree arrives, you should check [the matter] […] If there are no pictures and no *Miḥrāb*[22] in that house, and if when they worship God they do not read the Torah loudly, and nevertheless people hurt them and harass them, in contrast to the *Sharī'a*, in order to steal money and gain benefit – stop it, and do not enable anybody to behave in contrast to the noble *Sharī'a*. Castigate those who do not obey, and send their names to me.[23]

The scribe used Muslim terminology here. *Miḥrāb* is a semi-circular niche in the front of the mosque that indicates the *Qibla*; that is to say, the direction in which the community faces while praying. There is no doubt that the scribe was referring to the ark of the synagogue, which is also located in front of the

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21   R. Elijah b. Ḥayim, *Ḥeleq Rishon mi-Teshuvot She'elot* (Istanbul, unknown printer: circa 1610) §60, p. 93c. The title page of the book lacks a date and the name of the printer. Following the reference to 'in the city of the great king Sultan Ahmed' (בקרית המלך האדיר שולטאן אחמיט), researchers dated it to the reign of Ahmed I (1603–1617). The date here (circa 1610) is according to the record in the *Bibliography of the Hebrew Book* of the National Library of Israel. The reliability of the place's record on the title page was a source of controversy among scholars; see Heller M.J., *The Seventeenth Century Hebrew Book: An Abridged Thesaurus* (Leiden – Boston 2011) vol. 1, 123.

22   I preferred to keep the original Arabic term in my translation (the text itself was written in Turkish). In their Hebrew translation, the editors used the Hebrew term *Mizraḥ* (literally: 'east'), which indicates the direction of the Jewish Prayer. The term is Ashkenazic and reflects the fact that in Central/East European Jews' eyes the Land of Israel was located in the east (even though it is actually southeast of Europe).

23   Cohen – Simon-Pikali, *Jews in the Moslem Religious Court* 79–80 (my translation).

worshippers. Indeed, in some synagogues in Muslim countries, the ark was influenced in its design by the Muslim *Miḥrāb.*

According to Jewish law, a synagogue is a holy place and has many restrictions (it is forbidden to eat or sleep inside it; it may be sold only under certain conditions, etc.). There is no need of a certain object, or a certain design, in order to define it as a synagogue. The only conditions are the intention to use the space as a synagogue, and the inauguration of the space as a prayer space by ten men.[24]

However, the Muslim authorities were bothered mainly by the physical appearance of the synagogue. The cases discussed above, in Jerusalem and Istanbul, reflect the fact that the policy against new synagogues was focused on the question of visibility. A building was considered a synagogue if it contained the typical elements of classic synagogues: Torah ark, *parokhot* (curtains for covering the ark), a *bimah* (the podium from which the Torah is read), oil lamps hanging from the ceiling, etc.

The establishment of small synagogues inside private houses was a means of circumventing the Islamic law prohibiting the building of synagogues. The sultans wanted to give their Jewish subjects (as well as their Christians subjects) a certain degree of religious freedom, but did not desire a confrontation with the *'Ulamā'*, the Muslim sages, who criticized the sultans' tolerance towards non-Muslims.[25]A hidden synagogue, in a private house, which did not bear any standard religious symbols, was something that the sultans could live with.

5   Public Prayers in Private Homes: Social Implications

This unique situation of public prayers in private homes sometimes provoked conflicts between the homeowner and the worshippers. The conflicts were caused by several issues, including rental fees, the demand for special rights for the owner's family, and the appointment of trustees among the worshippers. For example, for a while the synagogue of the North-African Jews in Cairo was located in a house that belonged to a widow called Najma. Initially, she rented one of the rooms to the *Qahal* for prayer, but later, she sold part of the

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24   R. Joseph Karo, *Shulḥan 'Arukh* (Venice, Meir Parenzo and Aluise Bragadin: 1564), *Oraḥ Ḥayim*, §153,8.

25   The tolerant policy of the Sultans, as shown by Karen Barkey, was caused by their desire to build their image as protectors of the non-Muslim minorities and thereby to strengthen the stability of their kingdom; see Barkey K., *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: 2008).

space to the community, while another space remained rented. An anonymous questioner described the situation to Rabbi David ibn Zimra (d. 1572/3), the famous Sephardic sage:[26]

> Rachel[27] has a house which was rented to the *Qahal* for several years for prayer. Then she had financial problems and sold a quarter of the house to the *Qahal*. Because of the [large] number of worshippers, it was necessary to break walls in the house and to build and repair it, in order to expand it. They appeased her with some (amount of money) until she gave permission to break and rebuild.[28]

Additional information about this incident can be found in the Cairo Genizah. A court deed with the agreement between the two sides about this renovation resides in the Cambridge Genizah collection,[29] and it sheds light on the renovation and on the history of the Maghribian immigrants in Egypt in the Early Ottoman period.[30] However, after the renovation, Najma wanted to raise the rental fees, but the representatives of the *Qahal* refused and said that since they had paid the renovations from their own funds, Najma had no right to raise the rent. The litigants went to the court of R. David ibn Zimra, who accepted the *Qahal*'s argument.

Conflicts over financial affairs in private synagogues were the simplest type of problem. More problematic were conflicts over control, which had the potential to destroy the *Qahal* completely.

Private ownership of a synagogue gave a great deal of power – too great – to the owner. The community of worshippers was dependent on the good will of the homeowner, and could suffer as a result of his/her whims. For instance, Rabbi Moses of Trani discussed the case of a man from an unidentified city who dedicated a house in his ownership to the construction of a synagogue, but later decided to convert. After his conversion, he returned and expropriated

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26   On Ibn Zimra, see Zimmels H.J., *Rabbi David Ibn Abi Simra* (Breslau: 1932); Goldman, *Rabbi David Ibn Abi Zimra*.

27   Her name actually was Najma (in Arabic: a star), as mentioned above, but in the Responsa literature it is very common to give the person a generic name, like Reuben and Simon for men, and Rachel and Leah for women.

28   R. David Ibn Zimra, *Shut ha-Radbaz* (Warsaw: 1882) I, §146, 102a.

29   MS Cambridge, T-S 13 J 37.1. Published by Arad D., "Cairo's Maghribians and Musta'ribs: From Close Cooperation to Conflict and Estrangement", in Ben-Naeh Y. – Idel M. – Cohen J. – Kaplan Y. (eds.), *Studies in Jewish History Presented to Joseph Hacker* (Jerusalem: 2014) 482–485 (Heb.).

30   Arad, "Cairo's Maghribians and Musta'ribs" 470–479.

the synagogue from its use by the worshippers, although he was willing to sell it to them.[31]

Conducting communal religious life in private homes weakened the power of the leadership of the *Qahal*. A synagogue under private ownership had two competing centres of power: the leaders of the community and the owner of the home. For example, in a private synagogue in Salonica, the leadership of the community decided to publish rules concerning communal taxes. Every Jewish community in the Ottoman Empire had a set of communal rules [in Hebrew: *Haskamot*] that covered cases which were not dealt with in Jewish religious legal texts. The majority of the community agreed to accept these new rules, but a minority rejected them. The landlord, who was among the minority, declared:

> If you don't want to accept my opinion, go out of my synagogue. And he did so many times, when a person or even many people from the *Qahal* disagreed with him.[32]

As a result, the majority decided to leave the synagogue and establish a new synagogue under common ownership. The majority also wanted to take all the holy objects which were kept in the private synagogue and which had been donated by the worshippers with them to their new synagogue. The owner of the building argued that communal rules forbade dividing the *Qahal*, and that people who left the synagogue had no right to the holy objects. The question was discussed by several noted scholars, including Rabbi David ibn Zimra of Cairo. Ibn Zimra thought that the people who left the synagogue were entitled to leave and to take all the objects with them. He concluded:

> They will be blessed, because they will pray now in a place belonging to the public, giving everyone an equal right, and not in a place that belongs to an individual.[33]

Ibn Zimra therefore gave priority to the public synagogue, which belonged equally to each member of the community, rather than to a private synagogue. Nevertheless, private synagogues became more and more widespread during the sixteenth century and even more so during the seventeenth century.

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31 R. Moses Trani, *She'elot u-Teshuvot*, I, (Venice, Pietro, Aluise and Lorenzo Bragadin: 1629) §214.
32 Ibn Zimra, *Shut ha-Radbaz*, I, §292, 46a–46b.
33 Ibid.

Conducting public prayers in private homes became a factor that weakened, rather than strengthened, the power of the community. It preserved power in the hands of a small number of people – the rich men who had the money that enabled them to hold the synagogues in their homes – and disturbed the effort to build an equal and democratic community.

During the seventeenth century, the framework of the *Qahal* based on a common origin of immigrants became weaker and weaker. New social frameworks appeared in Jewish society, including social organizations, guilds and urban associations.[34] The framework of the *Qahal* was very useful in the first generations after the great migration to the Empire, but later lost its power and finally disappeared. Conflicts about control in synagogues and other places, however, have remained with us up to the present day.

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34   See Ben-Naeh Y., "Jewish Confraternities in the Ottoman Empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries", *Zion* 63 (1998) 277–318 (Heb.).

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PART 2

Confessional Confrontation

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CHAPTER 3

Psalm-Singing at Home: The Case of Etienne Mathieu, a Burgundian Protestant

Kathleen Ashley

The Biblical psalms have been central to western worship since the Middle Ages, when monks focused their devotions on the psalter and the later medieval laity incorporated them into their Books of Hours.[1] Roger Wieck points out that 'the great armature for most prayers in the Book of Hours is Psalms. A total of thirty-seven Psalms form the Hours of the Virgin; these did not change. Nor did the seven of the Penitential Psalms or the twenty-two in the Office of the Dead'.[2] Virginia Reinburg adds that while Books of Hours were 'largely liturgical' (that is, drawn from monastic liturgical offices), they were not supervised by clerical officials.[3] The psalms of David were even more intensely the devotional centrepiece of sixteenth-century Protestants throughout Europe.[4] In this essay, my focus is the central role played by the psalter – as translated into French by Clément Marot and Théodore de Bèze – during the French wars of religion between 1561 and 1598.[5]

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1   The original version of this essay was presented at the conference on *Domestic Devotions in the Early Modern World, 1400–1800*, the University of Cambridge, 9–11 July 2015. I would like to acknowledge the contributions of my partner in the archives, John Reuter.

2   Wieck R., *Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art* (New York: 1997) 10. On the development of Books of Hours for the laity from monastic devotional books, see also Duffy E., *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers, 1240–1570* (New Haven – London: 2006) 3–52.

3   Reinburg V., *French Books of Hours: Making an Archive of Prayer, c. 1400–1600* (Cambridge: 2012) 15–20.

4   See Craig J., "Psalms, groans and dogwhippers: The soundscape of worship in the English parish church, 1547–1642", in Coster W. – Spicer A. (eds.), *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: 2005) 104–108. Using churchwardens' accounts of London parishes, Craig documents the popularity of psalm-singing: 'It would be hard to underestimate the popularity of singing metrical psalms and as difficult to estimate the influence these verses had upon popular Protestantism at the parish level' (108).

5   Austern L.P. – McBride K.B. – Orvis D.L., "Introduction", in Austern L.P. – McBride K.B. – Orvis D.L. (eds.), *Psalms in the Early Modern World* (Burlington, VT – Farnham: 2011) offers a fascinating, wide-ranging survey of the 'Psalms' movement across national boundaries and confessional divides that 'inscribes a map of early modern travel, commerce and cultural exchange', which, the editors point out, challenges the historical narratives of that time. On the

As early as the 1550s, singing the psalms in the *vernacular* rather than the orthodox Latin version became the identifying mark of a Huguenot (French Protestant) and a trigger for repression of the group that Catholics referred to as the 'Religion Prétendue Réformée' (the so-called Reformed Religion).[6] Typically, attention was drawn to Huguenots by their public psalm-singing in the vernacular – often while walking in the street in groups. One of the earliest and best-publicized incidents took place in Lyon in 1551, when a group of artisans and *menu peuple* (common people) marched through the city centre 'shouting insults against the clergy and singing the psalms in French in a loud and offensive manner'.[7] By 1558 in Paris, several thousand Protestants gathered each evening at the Pré-aux-Clercs to sing the psalms.[8] It is difficult to see these numerous incidents reported in town registers or criminal records as other than a deliberate flaunting by Protestants of their confessional identity, intended to be openly provocative. Mack Holt, drawing on Dijon records, describes the Huguenot habit of singing the Psalms of David very loudly in their shops and homes as a refusal to accept restrictions on the practice of their religion, which was taken (and probably intended) as an insult to their Catholic neighbours.[9]

However, one criminal dossier from the Burgundian town of Chalon-sur-Saône centres on the singing of vernacular psalms *in the privacy of his house* by Etienne Mathieu, a merchant. It opens a window on Protestant domestic devotion just before the Edict of Nantes (1598) and raises the question of whether a distinction between the domestic and the public was possible during the half century of religious strife in France.

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psalms' important role in the literature of early modern England and colonial New England, see the essays in the collection. On the words and music of the Geneva Psalter, see 21–23 of the "Introduction".

6   Article 16 of the 1576 Edict of Beaulieu mandated that Huguenots should always be referred to by this phrase; see Holt M.P., *The French Wars of Religion, 1562–1629* (Cambridge: 1995) 105. B.B. Diefendorf analyses "The Huguenot Psalter and the Faith of French Protestants in the Sixteenth Century", in Diefendorf B.B. – Hesse C. (eds.), *Culture and Identity in Early Modern Europe (1500–1800): Essays in Honor of Natalie Zemon Davis* (Ann Arbor: 1994) 41–63; see her notes for basic references on the history and creators of the Protestant Psalter.

7   Watson T., "Preaching, printing, psalm-singing: The making and unmaking of the Reformed church in Lyon, 1550–1572", in Mentzer R.A. – Spicer A. (eds.), *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World, 1559–1685* (Cambridge: 2002) 17.

8   De Waele M., *Réconcilier les français: Henri IV et la fin des troubles de religion, 1589–1598* (Québec: 2010) 18.

9   Holt M.P., "Religious Violence in Sixteenth-Century France: Moving Beyond Pollution and Purification", in Murdock G. – Roberts P. – Spicer A. (eds.), *Ritual and Violence: Natalie Zemon Davis and Early Modern France, Past & Present* 214, Supplement 7 (2012) 64, 65, 67, 69.

Etienne Mathieu, who was arrested on report of his Protestant sympathies, was adamant in his own defence that because he was not singing the psalms *in public* – which he admitted would be a 'scandal' and disruptive – he should not be punished. In the privacy of his house, he claimed, he could do whatever he liked. The dossier that documents arguments on both sides of the question is a hefty one, and it testifies to the contested status of the home when it was the site of forbidden religious devotions.

It is difficult to overstate the social instability of the second half of the sixteenth century in France, much of it due to the vacillation of successive royal authorities who handed down eight different Edicts of Pacification in thirty-six years – or approximately one every four years.[10] Each new edict of pacification re-defined the relationship of the Protestants to the polity, sometimes in entirely opposite ways. The majority of the edicts made the new religion legal but restricted its practice severely, for example only to certain towns and on the private estates of the nobility.[11] Then, a new edict would rescind even those limited guarantees, outlawing the Protestant cult entirely, banishing the pastors, and requiring all Protestants to abjure and disarm. Timothy Watson describes the plethora of contradictory edicts as the 'incoherence of royal policy-making'.[12]

As national policy vacillated, local persecution of Protestants flourished and the confused and hostile atmosphere also resulted in continuous contention over what behaviours were legal. According to Bernard Cottret, all of the edicts leading up to the Edict of Nantes in 1598 affirmed the right of liberty of conscience, with its extension in private devotion – but that was in principle.[13] Much still depended upon interpretation and implementation by local authorities. In Etienne Mathieu's case, the issue was whether psalm-singing in the vernacular was allowable in his domestic space.

French society experienced cultural whiplash between 1562 and 1598, and the distinction between public and private worship was complicated during this period by the reluctance of authorities to let the Huguenots have their

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10   See Stegmann A. (ed.), *Édits des guerres de religion* (Paris: 1979); also Haag E. – Haag E., *La France Protestante*, 10 vols. (Paris: 1846–59) for copies of the edicts. Sutherland N.M., *The Huguenot Struggle for Recognition* (New Haven – London: 1980) has useful summaries of the edicts.

11   Roberts P., *Peace and Authority during the French Religious Wars, c. 1560–1600* (New York: 2013) analyses the complexities of implementing the many contradictory edicts with an emphasis on the local level.

12   Watson, "Preaching, printing, psalm-singing" 15.

13   Cottret B., *1598 L'Édit de Nantes: Pour en finir avec les guerres de religion* (Saint-Amand-Montrond: 1997) 358–359.

houses of worship (their 'temples') inside town walls. When Huguenots were granted permission to have a temple, it was commonly in a suburb *outside* the walls. Often they were not authorized to meet in a formally-designated building, and the result was clandestine worship in private houses.[14]

The blurring of boundaries between communal worship and domestic devotion was therefore typical of Huguenot culture in the sixteenth century, though it reached a climax in 1660 when all public worship by Protestants was forbidden in France and the temples were torn down. Huguenots who continued to practice their religion were driven indoors. As Raymond A. Mentzer and Andrew Spicer comment, 'the end of formal services initially shifted the locus of Huguenot religious culture to the domestic sphere. Although household worship had always been an important element in Reformed piety, it now assumed primacy'.[15] But that development came sixty-six years after Etienne's case in 1594, a time of considerable ambiguity about what was authorized – an ambiguity Etienne seems to have taken advantage of in contesting his imprisonment. The unstable legal situation provided shifting ground for religious experience and, one might add, created some flexibility in evading persecution and prosecution.

By 1594, the psalms in French had been politically-charged for half a century. The Geneva Psalter always cited by Huguenots took shape over several decades. Calvin sought out Clément Marot – the most popular poet of early sixteenth-century France – to versify the psalms for use in church worship, and editions of the collection appeared in 1539 and in the 1540s. After Marot died in 1544, Calvin asked Théodore de Bèze – a brilliant scholar, theologian, and his eventual successor as spiritual leader of the Protestants – to complete the translations and versification.[16] The result was the Geneva Psalter of 1562, which came to be important for both public and private worship.

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14   For a broader survey of Huguenot temples in the political landscape, see Spicer A., "'Qui est de Dieu oit la parole de Dieu': The Huguenots and their temples", in Mentzer – Spicer, *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World* 175–192. See also Roberts P., "The Most Crucial Battles of the Wars of Religion? The Conflict over Sites for Reformed Worship in Sixteenth-Century France", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 89 (1998) 247–267. The persecution of Protestants continued throughout the seventeenth century, until they were finally ejected from France in 1685 by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; Deyon S., "La destruction des temples", in Zuber R. – Theis L. (eds.), *La révocation de l'Edit de Nantes et le protestantisme français en 1685: Actes du colloque de Paris* (*15–19 octobre 1985*) (Paris: 1986) 239–259.

15   Mentzer R.A. – Spicer A., "Epilogue", in Mentzer – Spicer, *Society and Culture in the Huguenot World* 228.

16   For a summary of Bèze's high-profile career, see Jouanna A. – Boucher J., "Bèze, Théodore de", in Jouanna A. et al. (eds.), *Histoire et Dictionnaire des Guerres de Religion* (Turin: 1998) 724–726; also Dufour A., *Théodore de Bèze, Histoire littéraire de la France*, L'Académie des

The early 1590s were the high mark of power of the zealous Catholic League, which had taken over the town governments of Dijon and Chalon.[17] Given that public singing of the psalms in the Marot/Bèze translation was the preferred mode of provocation by Huguenots, guaranteed to rile both ordinary Catholics and the authorities, Etienne Mathieu's psalm-singing could never be just a neutral act. The question was one of control over the private domestic space.

The dossier preserved in the Chalon town archives brings to vivid life the effect of these religious debates on ordinary citizens.[18] More precisely, it shows how sixteenth-century Burgundians negotiated the complex and shifting cultural world in which they were living. It set the scene at the main bridge over the Saône River, where twelve citizens from the neighbourhood were on duty guarding the gate. They were at their midday break on Wednesday 21st January, sitting together at a table on the riverbank, when someone mentioned that he was so upset by his neighbour who was loudly singing the Protestant psalms at her house next door that he chastised and threatened her. At this, Etienne Mathieu (the focus of the case) commented that *he* wouldn't forbid his neighbour from doing what she wanted in her own house and that, as for himself, he could sing the psalms this very night and no one could stop him. Furthermore, he thought it was better to sing those psalms than to sing lubricious popular songs. Others at the table reminded him that the vernacular psalms were prohibited since they brought scandal to upstanding people (*gentz de bien*) and good Catholics, but Etienne stubbornly held to his point of view. The group nearly came to blows, so Etienne was arrested since – as the first document dated 22nd January explains – he was saying scandalous things against the Catholic church and no-one could tolerate the disruptive behaviours he was inciting; after all, the neighbourhood guard should maintain unity for the

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Inscriptions et Belles-lettres, vol. 42 (Paris: 2002). On Marot, see Wursten D., *Clément Marot and Religion: A Reassessment in the Light of his Psalm Paraphrases* (Leiden: 2012). See also the many essays on the Geneva (or Huguenot) Psalter in Higman F. – Kirschleger I. (eds.), "Les Psaumes de la Réforme", *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français* 158, 2 (2012); and Trocmé-Latter D., "The Psalms as a Mark of Protestantism: The Introduction of Liturgical Psalm-Singing in Geneva", *Plainsong & Medieval Music* 20, 2 (2011) 149–167.

17   The classic study of the League in Burgundy is Drouot H., *Mayenne et la Bourgogne: étude sur la Ligue, 1587–1596*, 2 vols. (Dijon – Paris: 1937). However, his socio-economic analysis has been challenged; see Holt M.P., "The League in Burgundy: A 'Bourgeoisie Seconde'?", *French History* 17, 4 (2004) 352–366.

18   Archives de Chalon FF 8.

conservation of the city. Protestants are clearly depicted in this document as troublesome, and Etienne in particular is described as a difficult character.[19]

The Chalon prosecutor then took over to record the testimony of four witnesses who had been at the guard dinner table. Jehan Margaud, a prosecutor of the *bailliage* and *chancellerie* of Chalon, aged 30 years, took his oath on the gospel that Etienne Mathieu was defending the so-called reformed religion as the *true* religion because it was in the service of God and Justice. He recounted that Etienne said those songs were agreeable to God in praising Him, and when he sang them in his home in the evening no one could stop him.

The second witness was Philibert Muguet, a Chalon surgeon, aged 34 years, who added information about the female psalm-singer and other discussion at the table about the psalms. The woman, he said, lived in a small room near the billiard game site, and she was heard at 10 o'clock in the evening loudly singing the psalms in the Marot translation. Etienne Mathieu and another Protestant sympathizer at the table then asked whether it was wrong to do this, and were told that the singing 'scandalized' the neighbours since that version of the psalms was forbidden by the Catholic church. Muguet also testified that Etienne Mathieu said that singing dissolute and lubricious songs would be more scandalous than singing the vernacular psalms, and that he could sing them himself in his home without anyone stopping him. Muguet, who was testifying, added that Etienne had better sing quietly because if he heard Etienne singing the psalms loudly he would file a protest.

The third witness was Claude Basson, a tailor aged about 35 years. In Basson's description of the scene, the first witness Jehan Margaud picked up a '*pain*' – probably a loaf of bread or baguette – asking how much it cost. Basson guessed it cost about two *solz*, at which another of the Protestant sympathizers at the table said 'My God, we should praise God for the abundance that he gives us' by singing the psalm that says 'marvellous are your deeds'. (This is the second stanza of Psalm 139).[20] The tailor then said that he couldn't hear the rest of the

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19   This preliminary document is written by Jacques Parise, *docteur en droiz*, councillor at the *bailliage* and *chancellerie* of Chalon and the mayor of the city. The *greffier* (town scribe) transcribed it. Given the crowded intimacy of urban living – and the evidence of Etienne Mathieu's combative personality presented by witnesses – it is quite likely that the affluent merchant was well known by town officials charged with this case.

20   Psalm 139 has a pause after an initial section that might not have been sung (as explained by Florence Poinsot of the Paris Bibliothèque de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français). The second section beginning 'Pour vray, merveilleux sont tes faitz', expresses a favorite Huguenot sentiment of praise for God. See *Le Nouveau Testament*, printed at Geneva by Emeran le Melays in 1577, which has appended to it *Les Psaumes de David. Mis en rime Françoise par Clément de Marot & Théodore de Bèze* (Geneva: 1577). In this edition, an Epistle by an unnamed author is followed by a Théodore de Bèze poem, then the

conversation between the Protestant sympathizers and Margaud, since he was at the other end of the table, but he did overhear Etienne Mathieu say that he'd sung the psalms and would continue doing so.

On the 24th January at 10 a.m. in the Bishop's prison, Etienne Mathieu was interrogated by Pierre Gauthier, a lawyer who was also a town councillor and co-captain of the city, and by Gabriel Biney, the secretary of the town, at the request of Pierre Monnet, prosecutor of Chalon. Etienne identified himself as a merchant of about 62 years. He admitted to having had the conversation about the right to sing the psalms in one's own house, but he claimed he was talking about the *authorized* version of the psalms. He then denied any seditious talk about the so-called reformed church, although he did hear the other Protestant sympathizer propose singing the psalm that begins with the line 'marvellous are your deeds' (addressed to God). He denied most of Muguet's testimony, and when queried about the validity of the Marot/Bèze translation of the psalms he said that he left that up to those who were more learned, but he did know that the Catholic league did not sing the vernacular versions. He was somewhat vague on whether he had abjured as was mandated by the 1588 Edict of the Union, but he did say that he did the duty of a Catholic, meaning he confessed and took the sacrament at Easter and attended feast day services; just ask his confessor Mr. Guillaume Roux, the *bastonnier* (lay administrator) at Saint Vincent's Cathedral, Etienne suggested.

The interrogation of Etienne Mathieu was continued on 25th January, during which he said that the conversation about the psalms had not been explicit about which version was being referred to. The interrogator tried to pin him down on whether the psalms were those in the Protestant version, and whether he was defending the Protestant religion, but Etienne's responses were slippery. He said he had professed the new religion when it was permitted by the King's edict, but then, when a new edict mandated the Catholic faith, he had ceased to be Protestant. He remembered that he had been ordered to go before the King's officials at the *bailliage* of Chalon to abjure with many other people, but he couldn't remember if he had done so. There should be a written record if he had, he added, putting the investigatory onus back onto the authorities.

That same day there was a second round of interrogations of both the witnesses and of Etienne, evidently to see if any of the testimony was perjured.

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psalms with music and prayers – a very complete book for private devotions. There are instructions on how to celebrate the various sacraments, there are the Articles of Faith, prayers for fathers and servants in the morning, a Protestant Calendar with block prints – the psalms matched to the months etc. For a discussion of the many themes in the psalms that especially appealed to Huguenots, see Diefendorf, "The Huguenot Psalter" 41–63.

When asked about the accusations of Muguet, Etienne immediately said that his deposition should not be believed because there was bad blood between them. A fourth witness, Pierre Barbier, a baker, showed up belatedly and his deposition was taken. Etienne Mathieu also impugned the credibility of Barbier's testimony, saying that they had come to blows at the bridge guard a year before, with Barbier responding that it was the day of the Chalon massacre when they were arguing about the *ligueurs* (zealous Catholics) versus the royalists (who supported the king). Etienne also pointed out that Barbier had been fined numerous times for not upholding bakery standards, but Barbier responded that although, yes, he had been fined, his deposition was still accurate and he was an *homme de bien* (an honest and upstanding man).

The case for letting Etienne out of the prison was based on his denials but also on his age and illness – he had a *rheume* (a cold). Also his wife was ill in bed at home. A bail of 50 *escuz* (reduced from 100) was paid by another merchant friend, Edme Vadot, and Etienne was liberated on 26th January, having promised to return for all future legal proceedings.

On 28th January, a week after the incident at the bridge, the first witness Jean Margaud was recalled and, when Etienne was brought in to face him, Etienne said that they also had quarrelled before, not only at the bridge, but at the Beaune gate of the town and in the Saint Jean de Maisel neighbourhood – and Etienne added that, by the way, Margaud did not allow his wife to go to see her mother (implying he was a wife-abuser). Margaud denied all these accusations.

An undated 12-page document written by Pierre Monnet, the prosecutor of Chalon, in a fancy formal hand with Latin phrases thrown in, summed up the 'definitive conclusions' in the case against Etienne Mathieu. The document summarizes the charges that Etienne was defending Protestant ideas and practices, including singing the psalms in his own house. However, the prosecutor wrote that Etienne had not admitted singing psalms in the Marot/Bèze translation but rather claimed to be singing a mixed Latin/French version authorized by the Catholic Church.

He also cited the vicar who wrote the preface to the psalter translation of the Catholics that all religions sing the psalms, including Turks, Mohammedans, Jews, Greek Orthodox and Ethiopians; the heretics in the world use the psalms in their prayers, both public and private. The prosecutor said, however, that the Catholic Church in their public prayers preferred the Latin language as more suitable and vibrant (*plus propre et energique*) because it expressed more precisely with less ambiguity the divine and sacred mysteries. He pointed out that the Council of Trent (the fourth session, second decretal) had also mandated Latin for official public church reading, preaching and exposition, unlike the heretics – Lutherans, Baenists, Calvinists and other sects – who use

the vernacular. In a surprising turn, the prosecutor then admitted that Latin is only required for *public* worship; in *private* prayer, he said, the church tolerates each person speaking in his own vernacular because to God all languages are the same. And the prosecutor cited the letter of Saint Jerome to the venerable lady Marcella in support of his argument. There is nothing wrong, he reiterated, in the individual saying his prayers and singing the psalms in the French vernacular as long as he is in his private space.

That being true, however, worship in the home *must* be in the translation by the Paris doctors of the faculty of theology, the one approved by the Edict of King Henry II in 1547 and 1551. The translation by the Protestants Marot and Bèze was censured by the theology faculty and the Council of Trent. The prosecutor threw in the observation that those authorities also condemned using one's private worship for profane things, amorous passions, and fabulous or vain satires (*ridicules*) and defamatory libels. He recommended to the city council that Etienne Mathieu should take a vow of the Catholic faith and swear not to hold (either in public or private) views antithetical to the authorized religion, as well as singing the psalms only in the Catholic translation – all on pain of punishment.

On 13th February Etienne was thus officially instructed to take a vow of living and dying in the Catholic religion, according to the 1588 Edict of Henry III. Whether in public or private, it specified, Etienne must not hold propositions contrary to the Catholic religion, and he must not sing the songs in any but the authorized Catholic versions on pain of being fined 20 *escuz*, half to repair the church of the moat and the other half to repair the bridge.

On the 10th March 1594, the town authorities gave their follow-up verdict: Etienne Mathieu was condemned to a fine of ten *escuz*, to be divided among the religious orders – the Carmelites and the Cordeliers – and the hospital, the prisoners, and the repair of the church and cemetery. In line with both canon and civil laws, Etienne was also to make his official abjuration. However, as probably the town authorities suspected, Etienne was far from sincere in his promises. A document of 20th July records a fine on him for not following up. Then on 20th August he was also summoned to pay the expenses of the lawsuit against him.

Conclusions

Etienne Mathieu's legal tussles with the Chalon town councillors bring into relief the question of whether a distinction between public and private was salient during the religious wars of the sixteenth century. Could *any* religious practices in the home truly be considered 'domestic' – belonging to a domain

off-limits to regulation by hostile authorities? As Will Coster and Andrew Spicer comment in their introduction to their collection, *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe*, 'There is a tension inherent in all religions between the ownership of sacred space by the individual, the institution and the community […]. These tensions and complexities became all the more acute at the Reformation where the ownership of space and the public nature of worship became flashpoints for conflict, both theological and physical'.[21] Despite Etienne's vigorous insistence that he was not disturbing the public peace by singing at home, the Chalon town council concluded that his domestic space was *not* off-limits to their regulation of which translation he used in his devotions. In other words, worship in the home during the wars between Catholic and Protestant was as politically charged as devotions carried out in public – and as liable to punishment. The domestic space was neither safe nor apolitical for a Protestant like Etienne – although I must say it appears that the feisty and wily merchant was up to the match with the civic and religious authorities.[22]

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21   Coster – Spicer, *Sacred Space in Early Modern Europe* 12–13.

22   Etienne Mathieu's daughter Abigail seems to have inherited his tenacity in pursuing her goals, although she repudiated the family's Protestantism for a socially conscious Catholicism. Married five times, with a huge fortune at her disposal, Abigail was dedicated to civic philanthropy in Chalon-sur-Saône until her death in 1638. Her public career is traced in my recent article, Ashley K., "Abigail Mathieu's Civic Charity: Social Reform and the Search for Personal Immortality", in Vitullo J. – Wolfthal D. (eds.), *Money, Morality, and Culture in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Burlington, VT – Farnham: 2010) 197–215.

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Between Domestic and Public: Johann Leisentrit's (1527–1586) Instructions for the Sick and Dying of Upper Lusatia

Martin Christ

1 Introduction[1]

Dying in early-modern Europe was simultaneously domestic and public. As a growing body of work on public rituals of death emphasises, funerary processions, funeral sermons or bell ringing involved large numbers of people and in confessionally mixed areas they could constitute posthumous confessions of faith.[2] Yet no matter what the chosen faith of a believer, devotion became a domestic, if not a private, matter once someone was bed-ridden.[3] Sacraments and sacramentals associated with death had to be performed in a domestic context, and the final hours of a person's life were usually spent in their homes.[4] For the clerical authorities, this setting could pose problems of regulation, as it was harder to control the domestic devotions of a dying man or woman than it was to test their faith in a church. It was with this in mind that clerical actors instructed their clergy on how to behave towards their flock in

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1   I would like to thank Tom Hamilton, Jamie Page, Lyndal Roper, Carla Roth and the editors for their helpful comments. I am also grateful to the participants of the Domestic Devotions in the Early Modern World conference, the PRISMSOX Early Modern Exchange and the Oxford Early Modern Workshop for their useful suggestions.

2   For example, Bärsch J., "Ordo Exsequiarum und 'ehrliches Begräbnis'. Eine vergleichende Analyse katholischer und protestantischer Begräbnisordnungen der frühen Neuzeit aus liturgiewissenschaftlicher Sicht", in Brademann J. – Thies K. (eds.), *Liturgisches Handeln als Soziale Praxis. Kirchliche Rituale in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Münster: 2014) 307–323; Koslofsky C.M., *The Reformation of the Dead. Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, c.1450–1700* (Basingstoke: 1999); Hahn P., "The Reformation of the Soundscape: Bell ringing in Early Modern Lutheran Germany", *German History* 33, 4 (2015) 525–545. For English comparisons, see Cressy D., *Birth, Marriage and Death. Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: 1999) 379–469; Tankard D., "The reformation of the deathbed in mid-sixteenth-century England", *Mortality* 8, 3 (2003) 251–267.

3   Karant-Nunn S., *The Reformation of Feeling. Shaping the Religious Emotions in Early Modern Germany* (Oxford: 2010) 189–215.

4   Exceptions include battles or prisoners condemned to death.

times of sickness. The suffering or delirium that the seriously ill endured was worrying to clerical authorities as it was possible for heretics to snatch away souls and condemn them to hell in such a weakened state.

Fear for the souls of the dying was so pronounced that in the West-Bohemian region of Upper Lusatia, a Catholic minority perceived persecution by the authorities that was far more dangerous in their imagination than the sources suggest it was in reality. The region of Upper Lusatia is located between Saxony, Bohemia and Brandenburg and, whilst belonging to different realms, there was never a territorial overlord who was solely responsible for the region and could enforce political and religious change.[5] Bautzen was considered to be the capital of the region, as it was one of the largest and most prosperous towns.[6] From 1158 to 1526, the region belonged to the kingdom of Bohemia and therefore to ever-changing dynasties.[7] In 1526, Lusatia became a Habsburg territory, before it came into the possession of Electoral Saxony in 1635.[8] The Catholic Habsburg dynasty ensured that even if a town council decided to follow evangelical teachings it could not move decisively against Catholic actors. This royal protection resulted in constant negotiations between Lutheran town councils and the royally protected Catholic minority which found their focal point in three rural nunneries and the Catholic cathedral chapter in Bautzen.

Catholic domestic devotion was particularly emphasised by Johann Leisentrit, the dean (*Domdekan*) of Bautzen. Leisentrit was born in Olmütz in Moravia into an artisan's family in 1527 and then went on to study at the University of Krakow.[9] In March 1549, Leisentrit was ordained as a priest. Subsequently, he became tutor at the court of arch-duke Ferdinand in Prague. In 1551 he was appointed canon of the collegiate church of St. Peter in Bautzen and in 1559 Leisentrit became dean and general commissioner for Upper and Lower Lusatia. In this position he oversaw the religious life of the whole of

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5   For the Bohemian context, see also David Z.V., *Finding the Middle Way. The Utraquists' Liberal Challenge to Rome and Luther* (Washington, D.C. – Baltimore – London: 2003).

6   For the Lusatian League which Bautzen was part of, see Binder T. (ed.), *666 Jahre Sechsstädtebund* (Görlitz – Zittau: 2012).

7   See also Bahlcke J., *Regionalismus und Staatsintegration im Widerstreit. Die Länder der böhmischen Krone im ersten Jahrhundert der Habsburgerherrschaft (1526–1619)* (Munich: 1994).

8   Fickenscher D., "Die Oberlausitzer Stände und ihre politischen Beziehungen zu Böhmen während der Habsburgherrschaft (1526–1618)", in Dannenberg L.-A. – Herrmann M. – Klaffenböck A. (eds.), *Böhmen-Oberlausitz-Tschechien. Aspekte einer Nachbarschaft* (Görlitz – Zittau: 2006) 81–108.

9   See Gülden J., *Johann Leisentrits Pastoralliturgische Schriften* (Leipzig: 1963); Seifert S., *Johann Leisentrit 1527–1586 zum vierhundertsten Todestag* (Leipzig: 1987).

Lusatia.[10] Leisentrit was not only responsible for the Catholic minority population of the region but also for any Lutherans. Although papal representatives offered Leisentrit more lucrative and comfortable positions on multiple occasions, he remained in Upper Lusatia where he administered a largely Lutheran region. He died in Bautzen in 1586. While the Catholics of Upper Lusatia enjoyed royal protection, their number was steadily decreasing in this period. Leisentrit feared that 'heretics' (*Ketzer*) would convert the few Catholics that survived in Upper Lusatia while they were weak and bed-ridden. He is a fascinating case study because he illustrates what a Catholic deemed to be the central tenets of a Catholic death and on which rites he was willing to compromise with the Lutherans.

Leisentrit displayed a contradictory and varied interpretation of Catholicism. His religious policies do not fit neatly into the category of Counter-Reformation Catholicism but neither did he renounce his Catholic beliefs. He maintained a mixed religious character and at times tolerated religious developments that were not in line with post-Tridentine Catholicism. He carried out baptisms in the German vernacular, for example, a practice normally associated with Lutheranism. He contributed to the confessional ambiguity of a region of the Empire that underwent a steady definition of orthodoxies, but never experienced a strong confessionalisation.[11] Regulating domestic devotion was essential in warding off heretical threats for people like Leisentrit. Confessionally coded rituals, such as the singing of hymns in a domestic setting, have been studied in relation to persecuted minorities who sought to strengthen ties of kinship by participating in such actions.[12] Huguenot peasants in France, for example, continued singing Reformed psalms at home. In Upper Lusatia, however, any such domestic devotion would have been of a confessionally mixed nature because Leisentrit's instructions on care for the dying included Lutheran elements, raising broader questions about how domestic devotion was performed and regulated.[13]

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10   Lower Lusatia never recognised Leisentrit's authority in the same way that Upper Lusatia did.

11   Bahlcke J. – Dudeck V. (eds.), *Welt – Macht – Geist. Das Haus Habsburg und die Oberlausitz 1526–1635* (Görlitz: 2002); Bahlcke J. (ed.), *Die Oberlausitz im frühneuzeitlichen Mitteleuropa. Beziehungen, Strukturen, Prozesse* (Leipzig: 2007); Heimann H.-D. – Neitmann K. – Tresp U. (eds.), *Die Nieder- und Oberlausitz – Konturen einer Integrationslandschaft*, vol. 2: *Frühe Neuzeit* (Berlin: 2014).

12   Pollman J., "'Hey ho, let the cup go round!' Singing for reformation in the sixteenth century", in Schilling H. – Toth I.G. (eds.), *Cultural Exchange in Early Modern Europe*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: 2006) 294–316.

13   For a broader discussion of such confessional boundaries and their transgression, see Pietsch A. – Stollberg-Rilinger B. (eds.), *Konfessionelle Ambiguität. Uneindeutigkeit und*

The example of Leisentrit provides new insights into the idea of dying a good death in a domestic setting. Upper Lusatia was a multi confessional region where it was possible for individuals to express their religiosity in idiosyncratic ways because there was no central religious power that unified belief systems. This also meant that Catholics like Leisentrit worried what went on behind closed doors and how men and women behaved in their homes. It has been argued that while Leisentrit acted irenically towards the Lutherans, his theology remained orthodoxly Catholic.[14] A close analysis of his works shows, however, that although he wrote polemically against heretical sects, even in his theology of death he was willing to include Lutheran elements. For Leisentrit this was no contradiction because he knew that in order not to lose the few remaining Catholics in Upper Lusatia to Lutheranism, he needed to compromise and show some theological flexibility. Approaching Leisentrit's instructions on death by considering them in a domestic setting makes it possible to gain insights into the importance of domestic devotion, as well as illustrating the problems that authorities perceived with such practices.

2   Catholic and Lutheran Deathbeds

In order to understand Leisentrit's instructions for the sick and dying, it is necessary to first discuss what an ideal Catholic or Lutheran deathbed looked like.[15] In medieval Catholicism, *ars moriendi* instructed congregants on how to die a proper death, and their priests on the appropriate behaviour.[16] This tradition started with works such as Anselm of Canterbury's *Admonitio Morienti* or Johannes Gerson's *De arte moriendi* (1400/1401). One type of *ars moriendi* also contained images depicting a pious death.[17] These medieval illustrations show a dying person surrounded by saints and Jesus on one side and demons

	Verstellung als religiöse Praxis in der Frühen Neuzeit (Heidelberg: 2013); Kaplan B.J., *Divided by Faith. Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA – London: 2007).
14	Pavlickova R.P., "'Unter den Ketzern zu leben und zu sterben ist gar schwerlich und gefehrlich'. Das Sterbebuch des Johann Leisentritt im Kontext der katholischen Sterbebücher des 16. Jahrhunderts", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 107 (2016) 193–216.
15	For an Anglican deathbed, see Tankard, "The reformation of the deathbed".
16	Becker H. – Fugger D. – Pritzkat J. – Süß K. (eds.), *Liturgie im Angesicht des Todes. Reformatorische und Katholische Traditionen der Neuzeit*, vol. 2: *Katholische Traditionen* (Tübingen – and Basel: 2004); O'Connor M.C., *The Art of dying well; the development of the Ars moriendi* (New York: 1942).
17	See Resch C., *Im Angesicht des Todes. Frühe reformatorische Anleitungen zur Seelsorge an Kranken und Sterbenden* (Tübingen – Basel: 2006) 36–39; Crust L., *The Master E.S. and*

on the other, symbolising a struggle for the soul of the dying person.[18] The texts correspond to this idea that in order to reduce the time spent in purgatory, a dying person has to die a proper death. Once someone was bedridden, the family or friends of the sick person called on the priest, who processed through the town or village with the host and other liturgical equipment. Once the Catholic preacher had reached the house, his work consisted of three essential parts. First, confession with an absolution of sins, second a communion with the consecrated host and, finally, the extreme unction with blessed oil. Other sacramentals included the sprinkling of holy water onto the sick person, the kissing of a crucifix or the holding of a candle as a reminder of Christ's eternal light. While performing these rituals the priest or lay congregants could recite prayers, perform catechetical functions by asking the dying person about their belief or read Bible passages thereby calling them to penitence for their sins.[19]

After the Reformation, changes to these deathbed rituals were initially limited. In 1519, Martin Luther still retained penance, absolution and communion for the dying.[20] Extreme unction was no longer an essential part of the last rites but could still be performed, and the apotropaic functions of holy water and the blessed candles were challenged. Later, Luther removed extreme unction from the last rites completely.[21] But there were also significant local variations. In the church ordinance of electoral Brandenburg from 1540, the procession to the dying person's house was retained, including a sexton who carried a lit candle.[22] When Lutheran orthodoxies had been more clearly defined by the middle of the sixteenth century, last rites had been significantly simplified. Now, a Lutheran cleric would only provide confession and absolution and then give the dying person communion in both kinds. None of this process was considered to be a sacrament, unlike the Catholic last rites. Extreme unction, purgatory and the procession of the host were abandoned. Lutheran clerics developed their own version of *ars moriendi* which had a different emphasis

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the *'Ars Moriendi'. A Chapter in the History of Engraving during the XVth Century* (Oxford: 1898).

18   Crust, *Master E.S. and the 'Ars Moriendi'* 25–35.

19   Pavlickova, "Sterbebuch des Johann Leisentritt" 197–198.

20   Jordahn O., "Sterbebegleitung und Begräbnis bei Martin Luther", in Becker H. – Fugger D. – Pritzkat J. – Süß K. (eds.), *Liturgie im Angesicht des Todes. Reformatorische und katholische Traditionen der Neuzeit*, vol. 1: *Reformatorische Traditionen* (Tübingen – Basel: 2004) 1–23.

21   Ibid.

22   Jordahn O., "Sterbebegleitung und Begräbnis in reformatorischen Kirchenordnungen", in Becker H. – Fugger D. – Pritzkat J. – Süß K. (eds.), *Liturgie im Angesicht des Todes*, *Reformatorische und katholische Traditionen der Neuzeit*, vol. 1: *Reformatorische Traditionen* (Tübingen – Basel: 2004) 23–60, here 38.

to their Catholic counter-parts. Although Catholic *ars moriendi* also focused on Christ, this focus was even more pronounced in Lutheran deathbed manuals, where saintly intercession was replaced by a focus on Christ's redemption of sins. The cleric also provided solace (*Trost*). This emphasis was so strong that many of the Lutheran *ars moriendi* were called *Trostbüchlein* (solace booklets).[23]

3   Leisentrit's *Catholisch Pfarbuch*

Leisentrit's contribution to the genre of *ars moriendi*, his Catholic parish book (*Catholisch Pfarbuch*), displays a mix of Catholic and Lutheran elements. The book instructed men and women on how to behave in a domestic setting and was aimed primarily at Catholic clergy in Lusatia, but as the preface indicates, it could also be used by lay Catholics.[24] The work was published in 1578 in Cologne and contains more than one hundred small tracts on all aspects of the rituals of dying, including the correct administration of the Eucharist and small catechisms to be performed before penance. The parish book only partly belongs to a Catholic tradition. Just as Reformed and Lutheran theologians adapted the genre of *ars moriendi*, Leisentrit, too, altered the genre to fit the specific conditions of Upper Lusatia.[25] With clear and simple instructions, he addressed his priests who were supposed to hear confession, perform the Eucharist, give extreme unction and, while doing all this, comfort the sick and assure them of their Catholic belief. This makes it likely that he wanted his clergy to have this *Catholisch Pfarrbuch* with them in order to read prayers from it.[26] There is a second edition from 1590, also printed in Cologne, which only contains two woodcuts, as opposed to the twenty-three contained in the first edition, and a short extract printed after 1648.[27] Like most of Leisentrit's

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23   For example, Spangenberg Johann, *Ein new TrostBuechlin fur die Krancken Vnd Vom Christlichen Ritter* (Wittenberg, Georgen Rhaw: 1548).

24   Leisentrit Johann, *Catholisch Pfarbuch oder Form und Weise, wie die catholischen Seelsorger in Ober und Niderlausitz* [...] *ihre Krancken* [...] *besüchen* [...] (Cologne, Maternus Cholinus: 1590). For the kinds of instructions, see, for example, 15–24. Throughout, images are taken from the 1578 edition and quotes from the 1590 edition.

25   For Lutheran and Reformed *ars moriendi*, see Flaeten J.O. – Rasmussen T. (eds.), *Preparing for Death, Remembering the Dead* (Göttingen: 2015).

26   For the British context of prayers in domestic settings, see Ryrie A., *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: 2013), especially 363–409.

27   Anon., *Sicherste Streit und Siegs-Kunst im Todteskampff* [...]: *Aus Herrn Johann Leisentrits* [...] *Catholischen Pfarrbuch* [...] *nachgedruckt* (s.l., s.n.: after 1648).

works, the *Pfarbuch* was primarily aimed at the Lusatian clergy, but there are indications that it also circulated in Silesia, Bohemia and other territories.[28]

The presence of multiple confessions in Upper Lusatia was clearly a concern for Leisentrit, who wanted to ensure that as many people as possible retained their Catholic faith. Most of the tracts in Leisentrit's parish book are written as a dialogue between the priest and the sick or dying person. The instructions retained central elements of Catholicism. In line with Catholic doctrine, Leisentritt stressed the importance of extreme unction, a recommendation he also repeated in other works.[29] The priest was instructed to tell the sick person that it is a 'heiliges mittel' (holy remedy), instituted by Jesus, and to assure people of its salvific powers. Extreme unction is also depicted in a woodcut that is used in both Leisentrit's hymn book from 1567 and the parish book [Fig. 4.1]. In it, a priest is administering the sacrament with a man and a woman in attendance. It forms part of a depiction of the Seven Sacraments, making this woodcut distinctly Catholic. Leisentrit also recommended that dying people should hold a candle and that priests should sprinkle holy water onto the sick person. Unlike in Lutheran church ordinances, which cover all rituals surrounding death, Leisentrit did not mention the procession of the consecrated host and priest to the house of the dying person. For Catholic *ars moriendi*, however, it is not common to mention such a procession as they only focused on the domestic aspects of a person's death.

A woodcut from another of Leisentrit's works, his Catholic hymn book, illustrates both the Catholic rituals he wrote about and the centrality of domestic devotion for a dying person.[30] Figure 4.2, taken from a section that interrogates the dying person's piety, shows a priest and a boy administering the last rites to a bed-ridden man.[31] The scene is distinctly Catholic in nature, as the

28   Gerblich W., *Johann Leisentrit und die Administratur des Bistums Meißen in den Lausitzen* (Görlitz: 1931) 54.

29   Leisentritt Johann, *Forma germanico idiomate baptisandi infantes, secundum catholicae veraeque apostolicae ecclesiae ritum* [...] : *nebst einer Kirchenordnung* (Cologne, Maternus Cholinus: 1585) 38.

30   Leisentrit Johann, *Geistliche Lieder vnd Psalmen, der alten Apostolischer recht vnd warglaubiger Christlicher Kirchen* [...] (Bautzen, Hans Wolrab: 1567). See also Heitmeyer E. – Wetzel R., *Johann Leisentrit's Geistliche Lieder und Psalmen, 1567. Hymnody of the Counter-Reformation in Germany* (Plymouth: 2014); Heitmeyer E., *Das Gesangbuch von Johann Leisentrit 1567. Adaption als Merkmal von Struktur und Genese früher deutscher Gesangbuchlieder* (St. Ottilien: 1988).

31   On the woodcuts in the hymn book, see Harasimowicz J., "Zur Ikonographie der Bautzener und Görlitzer Drucke im 16. und frühen 17. Jahrhundert", in Bahlcke – Dudeck (eds.), *Welt-Macht-Geist* 163–176; Lambert E., "Singing Together and Seeing Differently: Confessional Boundaries in the Illustrated Hymnal", in Dietz F. – Morton A. – Roggen L. –
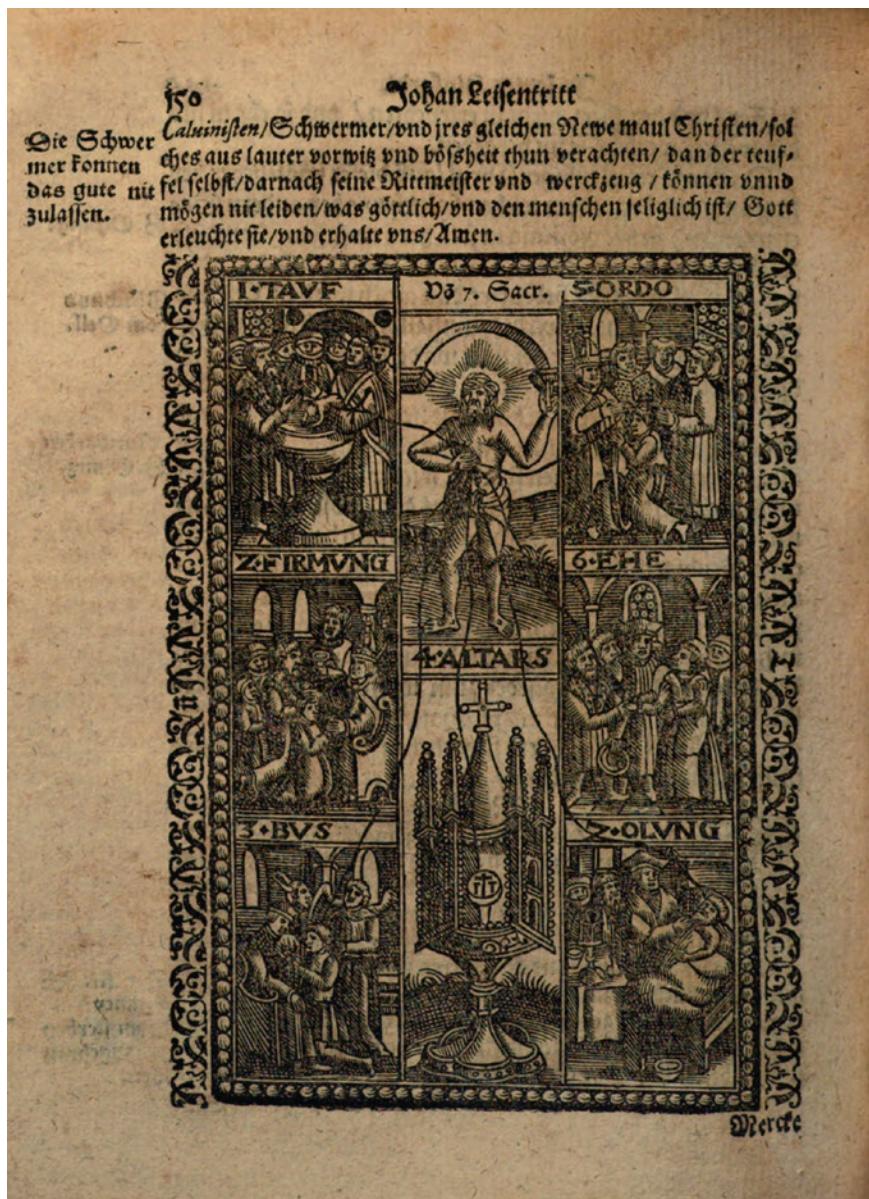
FIGURE 4.1   Unknown artist(s), "The seven Catholic sacraments", woodcut illustrations to
Johan Leisentrit, *Catholisch Pfarbuch oder Form und Weise, wie die catholischen
Seelsorger in Ober und Niderlausitz [...] ihre Krancken [...] besüchen, [...] zur [...]
Büß, und [...] entpfahung des Heiligen Sacrament des Altars [...] vermanen, [...] in
todtes nöten [...] trösten; mit nachfolgung einer Catholischen Protestation wider
alle Ketzereyen* (Cologne, Maternus Cholinus: 1578), p. 150. Bayerische Staats-
bibliothek, Munich, 4 Hom. 534#Beibd.1
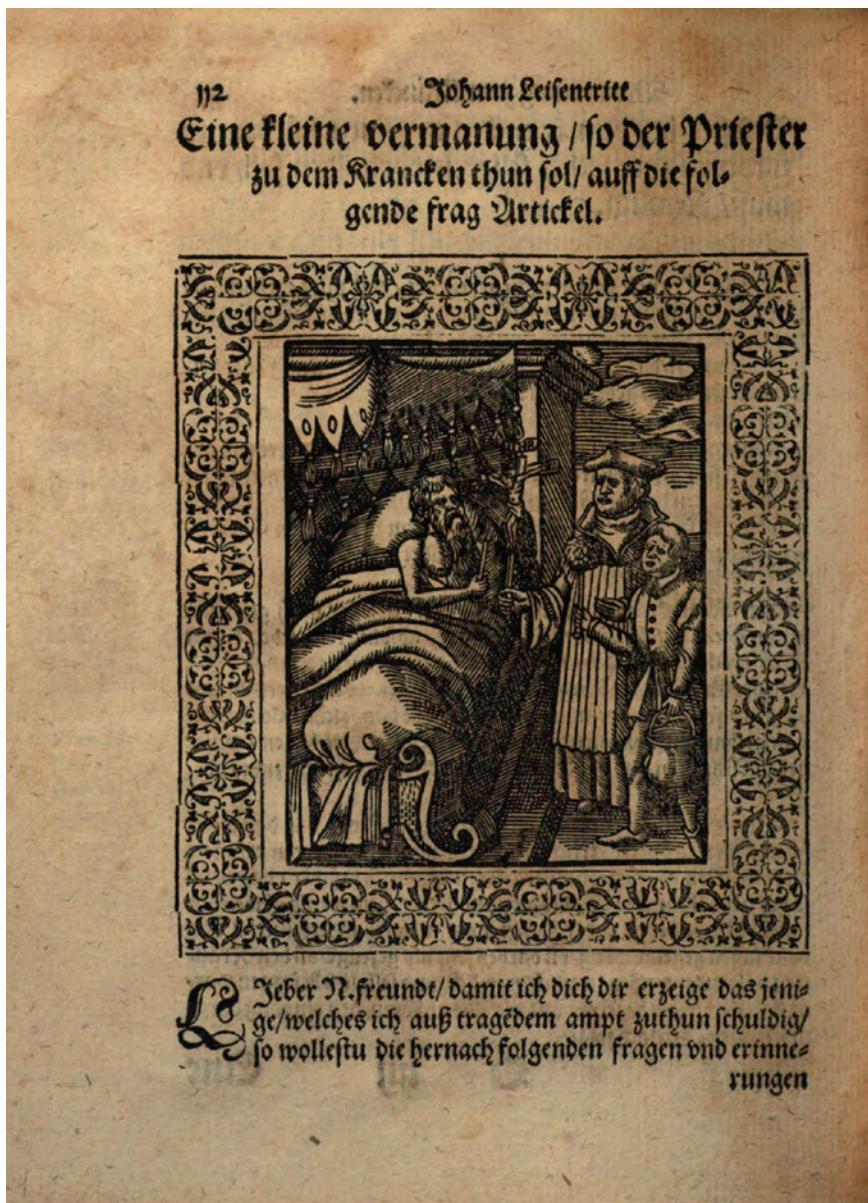
FIGURE 4.2   Unknown artist(s), "Administration of the Last rites by a priest", woodcut
illustrations to Johan Leisentrit, *Catholisch Pfarbuch oder Form und Weise, wie die
catholischen Seelsorger in Ober und Niderlausitz* [...] *ihre Krancken* [...] *besüchen,* [...]
zur [...] *Büß, und* [...] *entpfahung des Heiligen Sacrament des Altars* [...] *vermanen,*
[...] *in todtes nöten* [...] *trösten; mit nachfolgung einer Catholischen Protestation
wider alle Ketzereyen* (Cologne, Maternus Cholinus: 1578), p. 112. Bayerische
Staatsbibliothek, Munich, 4 Hom. 534#Beibd.1

boy is dispensing holy water with an aspergillum and the priest is holding up a crucifix which, according to Leisentrit, allowed the sick and dying to contemplate Christ's sacrifice for them.[32] The sick man is holding up a candle in line with Catholic rituals, a common trope also in scenes of Mary's deathbed.[33] According to Leisentrit, the candle served as a reminder of the light of Jesus who led everyone out of eternal darkness.[34] What makes this woodcut particularly interesting as a scene of domestic devotion is that it is poised interestingly between interior and exterior ritual, as the wall of the sleeping chamber stops short of the priest, above whose head clouds suggest that he is outside and not quite part of the domestic scene. The priest in this image is located at the intersection of the two spaces, illustrating that the bedchamber of a dying person was a liminal space in multiple ways; between public and domestic, sacred and profane, inside and outside, life and death. In the bedchamber all these binary opposites overlapped, showing the many functions a bedchamber served.

In an environment in which Catholics could convert very easily to Lutheranism, Leisentrit not only stressed the salvific powers of Catholicism but also wanted his priests to be able to comfort their flock. He knew, as the images and texts demonstrate, that dying in the early modern world was frequently associated with pain and suffering. Most of the bed-ridden men in Leisentrit's woodcuts display haggard features, and some need a pillow to prop up their heads. Here, he seemed to be encouraging his priests to emphasise that this suffering was not meaningless. Interestingly, the priest was not needed for all the rituals surrounding death. After confession and the Eucharist, which had to be performed by a priest, a lay person could console the dying by telling them that God calls people from the 'Jammerthal' (vale of tears) of this life when he deems fit. The range of people to whom Leisentrit referred also illustrates that a variety of people could be present when a person was dying, diluting the boundary between public and private. In contrast to the written instructions, where friends and family feature, most of the woodcuts do not contain any outsiders and only depict the dying person and the priest, in one instance with a young helper. This might be explained by Leisentrit's insistence that some

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Stronks E. – Vaeck M. van (eds.), *Illustrated Religious Texts in the North of Europe, 1500–1800* (Farnham: 2014) 257–274. For a comparison of the woodcuts in the three editions, see Lipphardt W., *Johann Leisentrits Gesangbuch von 1567* (Leipzig: 1964) 8–11.

32   Gülden, *Leisentrit* 151–154.

33   For the candle as a symbol of faith, see also Walsham A., "Domesticating the Reformation: Material Culture, Memory, and Confessional Identity in Early Modern England", *Renaissance Quarterly* 69 (2016) 566–616, here 594.

34   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 148.

rituals, such as the final confession, should be performed with only the dying person and a priest in the room.

The importance of all parts of the laity is illustrated when the fictitious priest addresses a sick woman. Normally the priest addresses the sick person as 'Lieber freundt' (dear male friend), but one tract starts with 'Lieber freundt (oder freundin)' (dear male (or female) friend).[35] This salutation formula was also used in medieval *ars moriendi*.[36] The priest (or lay person) was supposed to tell the dying person that it was God's plan to call them away from this evil world. Indeed, Leisentrit argued that the sooner someone dies, the happier they will be, because 'je lenger der Mensch lebet je mehrer und sehrer sein sünde' (the longer a human lives the more and greater are his or her sins).[37] At another point, Leisentrit explicitly included a range of people in his instructions and wrote that 'ein Catholischer mensch ehr sey ein Priester oder Leye Edell oder unedel Mans oder Weibs person' (a Catholic person, whether he is a priest or lay person, noble or not noble, man or woman) should avoid the temptations of the Devil and his heresies.[38] In opposition to Reformed predestinarian theology, Leisentrit emphasized that the sick can make a choice between the Devil and God and therefore influence their own salvation.[39]

The laity's role in consoling the sick and dying, and the inclusion of a broad range of people in the instructions, show Leisentrit's concern for his flock. The less regulated nature of domestic devotion necessitated a greater level of involvement on the part of the laity and the increasing importance of Lutheranism in Upper Lusatia meant that Leisentrit had to find a balance between confirming believers' Catholicism and consoling them during their suffering. In one of his instructions he recommends that his priests say:

> lieber freundt […] erschrecke nicht für des todts angesicht ehr ist nicht halb bos als ehr erscheinet das sterben [ist wie zu] entschlafen […] Christum Jesum unsern hern und Seligmacher ehr wirdt dir seine Göttliche handt reichen und aus dieser deiner letzten noth helfen

> (my dear friend […] do not be afraid of the face of death, he is not half as evil as he seems, death is only […] like falling asleep, […] Christ Jesus

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35   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 100.
36   Falk F., *Die deutschen Sterbebüchlein von der ältesten Zeit des Buchdrucks bis zum Jahre 1520* (Cologne: 1890) 17.
37   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 100.
38   Ibid. 141.
39   Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Feeling*.

our Lord and saviour will give you his divine hand and help you in your final need).[40]

As Susan Karant-Nunn has pointed out, *Trost* (solace) was particularly important amongst Lutherans.[41] Leisentrit, too, referred frequently to the importance of solace, giving some of the tracts in his work a Lutheran colouring.

But in Leisentrit's detailed accounts, what he did not mention is also significant. Although he stressed the importance of saints in other works, in the last dying words of the repentant sinner, there was no saintly intercession involved but just a prayer directed at Jesus. Similarly, when Leisentrit mentioned saintly intervention in relation to death and sickness in his *Pfarbuch*, he devoted only one page to the subject.[42] Other Catholic *ars moriendi* from the later sixteenth century contain frequent references to saints. In Adam Walasser's *Kunst wohl zu sterben* (Art of dying well) from 1569, a whole chapter is dedicated to saints and their deaths.[43] The focus on Jesus, rather than saintly intercession, also finds its visual equivalent in a woodcut of Jesus on the cross without Mary or any other saints surrounding him in the section on comforting those condemned to death in Leisentrit's *Catholisch Pfarbuch* [Fig. 4.3].[44] This is one of the rare occasions where the priest was instructed on how to use an image. The priest was supposed to say: 'Schaw an dises bilt welches in sich heldet und dir bedeutet das Jesus Christus […] vor dich gestorben' (Look at this image which contains in itself and signifies to you that Jesus Christ […] died for you).[45] The absence of saints and angels from most of the woodcuts is a notable difference to the illustrations in medieval Catholic *ars moriendi*.[46] There is also no reference to the Catholic practice of kissing the crucifix or purgatory. Although Leisentrit mentioned hell, he does not put the same emphasis as contemporary Catholic *ars moriendi* writers on purgatory. In Adam Walasser's work, for example, part of the instructions were dedicated to an explanation of purgatory,

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40   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 101.

41   Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Feeling*.

42   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 55.

43   Adam Walasser, *Kunst wol zusterben : Ein gar nutzliches Hochnothwendiges Büchlein auß heyliger Schrifft vnnd alten bewehrten Lehrern, mit sondern fleiß gezogen, vnd mit schönen Exempeln vnd Figurn gezieret* (Dillingen, Mayer: 1597) 255–270.

44   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 173.

45   Ibid. 173.

46   For the reinterpretation of angels in Reformation England, see Marshall P., "Angels around the Deathbed: variations on a theme in the English art of dying", in Marshall P. – Walsham A. (eds.), *Angels in the Modern World* (Cambridge: 2006) 83–104.

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nes Herrn Jesu Christi/zwischen mich vnd deinen zorn/vnd in deine hende befele ich meinen geist/denen du wollest auff vñ annemē/auch in dieser meiner gegēwertigē hinfarth/an armen Sünder gnedig vnd barmhertzig sein. Amen.

Wann aber nhun der arme sünder soll ausgefuret/ vnd wegen seiner missethadt/an leib vnd leben gestrafft vnd gerichtet werden / ist ein Christliches werck / wann die Oberkeit anordent/ das jnen der Priester mit offentlichen vermanung vnd tröstung/bis an die stadt des gerichts thut beleiten/ darumb vnd alsbaldt der Hencker oder nachrichter/den armē/vñ zu dē todt verurtheilten sündern angreiffen/jm die hende binden/folgendts jnen auch aus dem gefencknis furen will / soll der Priester gegenwertig sein/ ein Crucifix in d.r handt haben/ oder im vorher tragen lassen/ es dem armen sünder vorhalten/weisen vnd im tröstlich zusprechen. Wie folget.

Priester.

SCHAw an dieses Bilt/ welches in sich heldet vnnd dir bedeutet / das JESVS Christus dein Gott vnnd Herr von wegen deiner sünden/aus lauter Lieb vnnd Barmhertzigkeit / Ist am stamb des heiligen Creutzes vor dich gestorben der dir zugesaget/wo ehr wirdt sein/daselbst soll sein diener auch sein/ nemlich in dem Himmel.

Tren.3.
Hester 8.
Gal.2.
Phil.4.
Col.1.2
Heb.12.

Mercke.

Y iij   Hier

FIGURE 4.3 Unknown artist(s), "Christ on the cross", woodcut illustrations to Johan Leisentrit, *Catholisch Pfarbuch oder Form und Weise, wie die catholischen Seelsorger in Ober und Niderlausitz* [...] *ihre Krancken* [...] *besüchen,* [...] *zur* [...] *Büß, und* [...] *entpfahung des Heiligen Sacrament des Altars* [...] *vermanen,* [...] *in todtes nöten* [...] *trösten; mit nachfolgung einer Catholischen Protestation wider alle Ketzereyen* (Cologne, Maternus Cholinus: 1578), p. 173. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, 4 Hom. 534#Beibd.1

including a woodcut showing angels pulling souls out of purgatory.[47] Nothing of the kind can be found in Leisentrit's instructions.

4   Imagining Challenges to a Catholic Death

There is no indication that Catholics in Upper Lusatia were seriously persecuted and most conflicts occurred on a relatively small scale and with little violence.[48] Such attacks include the burning of two papal effigies in Bautzen in the early Reformation years, a congregation chasing away a monk with faeces and stones, and complaints that Catholic sermons took too long. But Leisentrit invoked a narrative of persecution in his works.[49] He wrote that a great contempt, blasphemy and back-handed, dangerous persecution against Catholics has grown in the region and is now out of control.[50] In Leisentrit's mind, the heretics have invited the Devil to take good Catholic souls to hell. In line with early modern theology, the Devil is seen as an opponent of God and the righteous believers: 'Wo der Sathan spreche […] furchte dich gar nicht dan[n] Gott verlast dich nicht' (Where Satan speaks […] do not be afraid because God will not leave you).[51] Leisentrit visualised these devilish temptations in one of the woodcuts in his *Catholisch Pfarbuch* which shows a sick man surrounded by three devils [Fig. 4.4]. It seems that this man is an example of someone who has turned away from his Catholic faith, as there is no priest nearby and no Catholic objects are visible in the scene.[52]

One particularly telling part of the *Pfarbuch* describes how a priest should behave towards 'Catholischen menschen mans unnd weibs personen so unter den ketzern sollen unnd müssen wonhafftig sein unnd bleiben' (Catholic people, men and women who have to live and remain amongst the heretics).[53] According to Leisentrit, dying as a Catholic amongst heretics brought considerable risks with it.[54] He wrote that he has known many people who suffered

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47   Walasser, *Kunst wol zusterben* 864.

48   For the Reformation context, see Speer C., "Die Reformation in der Oberlausitz. Ein Überblick", in Speer C. – Napp Th. (eds.), *Musik und Konfessionskulturen* 7–13; Blaschke K., *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Oberlausitz* (Görlitz – Zittau: 2000) 66–87.

49   Dittrich P., *Die Meissner Diözese unter der Kirchenpolitik des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Bautzen: 1960) 37–46.

50   Leisentrit, *Geistliche Lieder* 10.

51   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 114.

52   Ibid. 120.

53   Ibid. 139.

54   For this polemical dimension of Leisentrit's work, see also Pavlickova, "Sterbebuch des Johann Leisentritt".
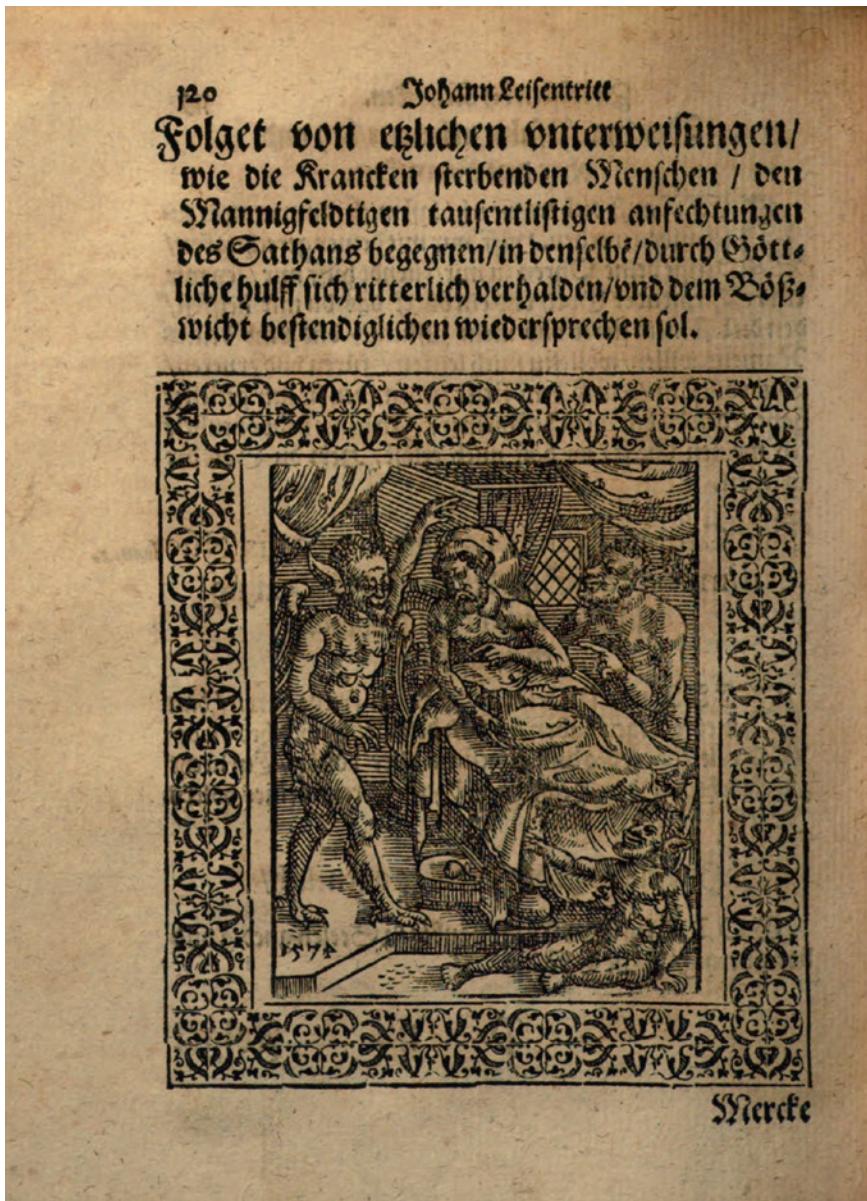
FIGURE 4.4 Unknown artist(s), "Dying man surrounded by three devils", woodcut illustrations to Johan Leisentrit, *Catholisch Pfarbuch oder Form und Weise, wie die catholischen Seelsorger in Ober und Niderlausitz [...] ihre Krancken [...] besüchen, [...] zur [...] Büß, und [...] entpfahung des Heiligen Sacrament des Altars [...] vermanen, [...] in todtes nöten [...] trösten; mit nachfolgung einer Catholischen Protestation wider alle Ketzereyen* (Cologne, Maternus Cholinus: 1578), p. 120. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, 4 Hom. 534#Beibd.1

persecution and ridicule for their faith, yet remained steadfast until death and continued in their Catholic beliefs regardless of such taunts. However, there were also those who suffer heavily and because of the great pain in his body, the sick man 'nicht weis was er thut als dann kommet erst der teuffel unnd sein werckzeugk (ich meine die auffruischen ketzerischen Clamanten)' (does not know what he does and so the Devil comes first and then his tools [I mean the rebellious heretical *Clamanten*]).[55] Leisentrit, for all his rhetoric of despicable heresies, therefore expected confessionally mixed groups to assemble around the deathbed. Within this heterogeneous setting, one might expect that Leisentrit also instructed his priests on how to convert Lutherans. The church ordinance of Brandenburg (1540) which specifically bans monks from attending to dying people shows that in other regions this was considered to be a problem.[56] Leisentrit, however, did not comment on such conversions, suggesting a lack of confidence on his part.

He conjured up a scene in which the heretics tempt the sick and dying 'mit sehr heuchlischen und schmeichlischen worten' (with very duplicitous and flattering words).[57] Leisentrit illustrated this point with the saying by Cato 'fistula dulce canit' which he then translated into German: 'Ein süsse Pfeiff der Vogler hat' (the bird catcher has a sweet whistle). But as if this explanation were not sufficient, he had to spell out 'Das er die Vögel bringt zum todt' (So that he can bring death to the birds).[58] At other points, Leisentrit has translated whole tracts which were previously only available in Latin.[59] So while Leisentrit saw his primary audience as one of educated Catholic priests, he also wanted to ensure that they were in a position to explain doctrine and heresies to the sick and dying in the vernacular.[60] It is likely that he also wanted lay congregants to read these German tracts. The many small tracts and woodcuts suitable for private contemplation suggest that the parish book could also be used for personal devotion.

Leisentrit prepared the dying for even greater perils. If a Catholic maintained his beliefs regardless of all temptations, the 'teuffel unnd sein mutter' (Devil and his mother) will tell the dying that:

> Als balt du Papistisch stürbest will ich vorbitten das man dir nit soll leuten dich auch nicht ehrlich sondern wie ein unvernünfftiges thier

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55   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 140.
56   Jordahn, "Sterbebegleitung und Begräbnis bei Martin Luther" 26.
57   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 140.
58   Ibid. 140.
59   Ibid. 202.
60   See also Gülden, *Leisentrit*.

ausschleppen dich auff den Schindt Anger legen unnd begraben lassen etc.

(if you [the sick] die as a Papist I will forbid that [bells] are rung [and you are buried] like a human and not honourably but take you outside like a wild animal, and put you on the village green to be buried there etc.).[61]

This episode illustrates how the act of dying linked the domestic and the public spheres. Although a person died in their private house and could receive penance, communion and extreme unction according to a certain religious tradition, when the deceased had passed away, a burial could be a very public affair.[62] In many parts of the early-modern world such burials could be contentious. Leisentrit, for one, felt the need to explain Catholic rituals such as bell ringing during funerals, in his Catholic hymn book. Medieval *ars moriendi* did not contain instructions on burials and only focused on the deathbed. Leisentrit clearly thought burials to be so important that he needed to include them in his parish book. The threat to bury someone in unconsecrated ground, like an animal, did not only have religious connotations but would also impugn the honour of an individual and their family.[63] As Craig Koslofsky and David Luebke have pointed out in different contexts, burials remained a disputed issue in Germany throughout the sixteenth century because they were interpreted as confessional markers of the deceased and their families.[64]

Some of Leisentrit's recommendations were practical, rather than theological, in nature. When someone was sick and thought that he or she might die, Leisentrit recommended that they should send for a Catholic priest immediately so that he could absolve them and administer the Eucharist. But Leisentrit's recommendations are even more specific, the dying 'richte sein angesicht ernider thu und mache seine augen zu als ehr stürbe oder schlaffen

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61   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 140. For gendered aspects of supernatural beliefs, visible in the phrase 'The Devil and his mother', see Roper L., *Oedipus and the Devil. Witchcraft, Sexuality and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London: 1994).

62   Duby G. (ed.), *A History of Private Life*, vol. 2: *Revelations of the Medieval World* (Cambridge, MA: 1993) 251.

63   For the importance of honour in judicial proceedings and in Upper Lusatian town statutes, see Schwerhoff G. – Völker M. – Bautzen S., *Eide, Statuten und Prozesse. Ein Quellen- und Lesebuch zur Stadtgeschichte von Bautzen 14.–19. Jahrhundert* (Bautzen: 2002); Fröde T., *Privilegien und Statuten der Oberlausitzer Sechsstädte. Ein Streifzug durch die Organisation des städtischen Lebens in Zittau, Bautzen, Görlitz, Löbau, Kamenz und Lauban in der frühen Neuzeit* (Spitzkunnersdorf: 2008).

64   Koslofsky, *Reformation of the Dead* 115–132; Luebke D.M., *Hometown Religion. Regimes of Coexistence in Early Modern Westphalia* (Charlottesville – London: 2016) 167–200.

wolte und sehe oder schawe diese gesellen [des Teufels] gar nichts an' (turn away his face and close his eyes as if he wanted to die or sleep and not look at these accomplices of the Devil).[65] Whether Leisentrit meant actual demons with these 'accomplices', or the Lutheran friends and family is not made explicit. He recommended that the dying, literally and metaphorically, turn away from the 'ketzerischen rottengeistern' (heretical horde).[66] Leisentrit advised that 'der Krancke kan soll unnd mag ehr seine ohren mit dem küssen [kissen] zustopffen unnd solche ansichtet unnd verfürer nicht hören' (the sick can, should and may stuff his ears with the pillow so that he does not hear such views and tempters).[67]

This advice is also depicted in the woodcuts in the *Pfarbuch*. One of the most fascinating illustrations is that of a dying man and a priest who is pointing at a figure resembling Venus or some other heathen idol [Fig. 4.5]. Admonishing the sick to turn away from it, the bed-ridden man turns to the priest instead. He ignores the devil lurking at the bottom of his bed thus complying with Leisentrit's instructions to turn away from any heretical temptations. In another woodcut, the Catholic invalid seems to have died already, his head turned towards the preacher [Fig. 4.6]. A physician is checking his urine (*Harnschau*) to diagnose the man and make sure he has died, while a Devil attempts to catch the man's eye in vain, as his head is firmly facing the priest who is sitting next to him.[68] In line with Leisentrit's recommendations, a crucifix has been placed above the dying man to remind him of the prospect of salvation.

Finally, Leisentrit discussed treacherous children who attempt to convert their fathers at the last minute. As Bob Scribner has pointed out, a common trope in Reformation propaganda was the narrative of a son convincing his Catholic father of Lutheranism.[69] Leisentrit portrayed the same episode rather differently. In Leisentrit's scenario a dying father asks his children to fetch a Catholic priest but when the priest arrives, they lock the door and 'mit kath unnd steinen entfangen hinweg geiagt' (welcomed him with dung and stones, and chased him away).[70] Here, by closing the door, the children separate their domestic setting from the influence of outsiders, illustrating Leisentrit's concern that the home will be inaccessible to Catholic priests. Indeed, Leisentrit even worried that if the sick person lost his faculties of reason, the heretics

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65   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 142.

66   Ibid. 100.

67   Ibid. 142.

68   For the uroscopy, see, for example, Jankrift K.P., *Mit Gott und schwarzer Magie. Medizin im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt: 2005) 26–28.

69   Scribner R.W., *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge: 1981) 9.

70   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 143.
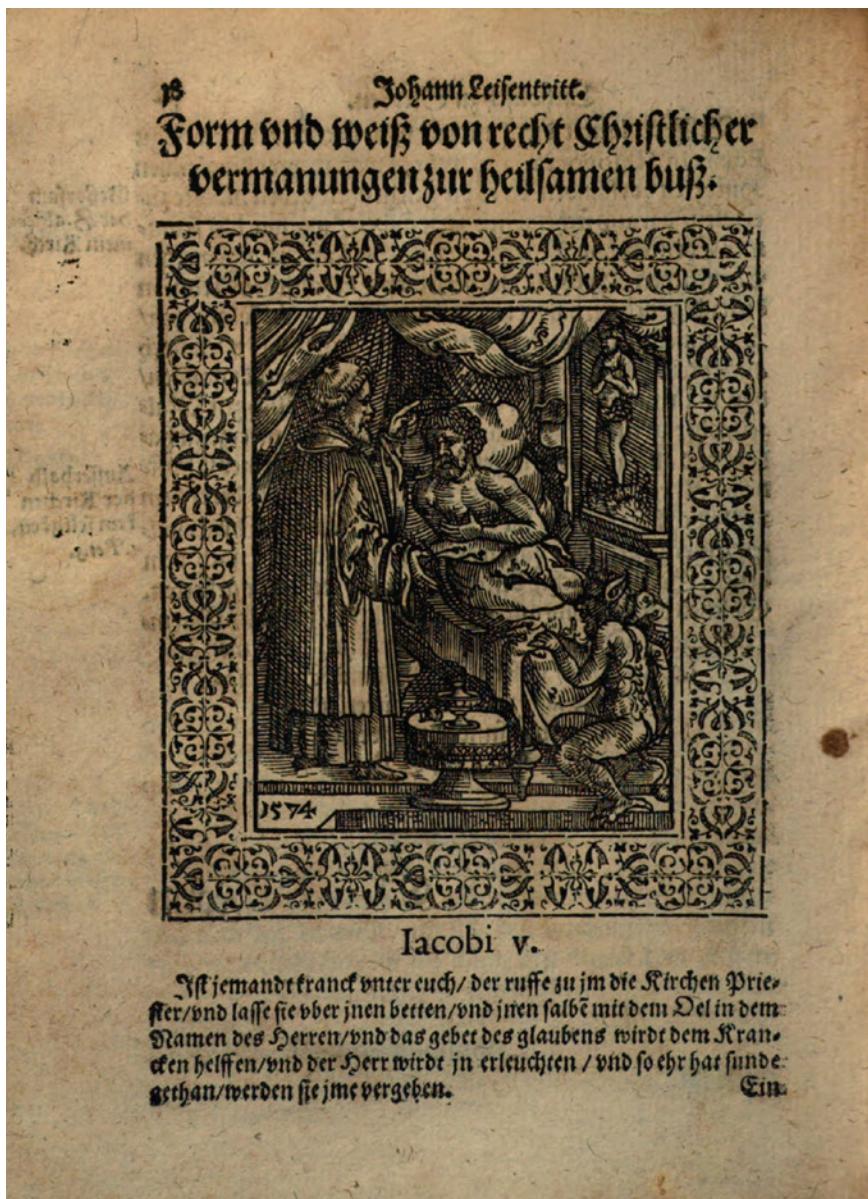
FIGURE 4.5   Unknown artist(s), "Priest with dying man", woodcut illustrations to
Johan Leisentrit, *Catholisch Pfarbuch oder Form und Weise, wie die
catholischen Seelsorger in Ober und Niderlausitz [...] ihre Krancken [...]
besüchen, [...] zur [...] Büß, und [...] entpfahung des Heiligen Sacrament
des Altars [...] vermanen, [...] in todtes nöten [...] trösten; mit nachfolgung
einer Catholischen Protestation wider alle Ketzereyen* (Cologne, Maternus
Cholinus: 1578), p. 18. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, 4 Hom.
534#Beibd.1

FIGURE 4.6   Unknown artist(s), "Dying man with priest, physician, and Devil", woodcut illustrations to Johan Leisentrit, *Catholisch Pfarbuch oder Form und Weise, wie die catholischen Seelsorger in Ober und Niderlausitz [...] ihre Krancken [...] besüchen, [...] zur [...] Büß, und [...] entpfahung des Heiligen Sacrament des Altars [...] vermanen, [...] in todtes nöten [...] trösten; mit nachfolgung einer Catholischen Protestation wider alle Ketzereyen* (Cologne, Maternus Cholinus: 1578), p. 44. Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich, 4 Hom. 534#Beibd.1
ALL IMAGES (4.1–4.6) REPRODUCED WITH KIND PERMISSION OF THE BAYERISCHE STAATSBIBLIOTHEK, MUNICH

'mit grossem ernst und gewaldt jr vermeinttes Sacrament den sterbenden eingestossen und eingegossen' (push and pour down, with great seriousness and force, their so-called sacrament).[71] In such circumstances, he wrote, a great 'geschrey und Jubiliren' (shouting and jubilation) would occur and in subsequent sermons the heretics would claim that a Papist in his last moments accepted their sacrament and converted to Lutheranism.

Leisentrit's solution to these problems was quite straightforward; he recommended that any non-Catholic priests should not be admitted into the house. Instead, he suggested that one should always have holy water at hand.[72] Alec Ryrie's observation that it was 'a truism for pious Christians on all sides [...] that life was a preparation for death' is also applicable to Leisentrit who reminded his flock to lead a pious life to ensure their salvation.[73] Those who were suffering and weak ought to be reminded of Christ's sacrifice and be consoled by a priest. In line with Catholic doctrine, Leisentrit recommended adding blessed salt to the holy water which should be applied generously to the whole bed chamber, as is depicted in figure 2. According to Leisentrit these actions helped guard against the temptations of Satan who often appeared in 'hesslicher gestalt' (ugly form) to make the sick despair.[74]

The drastic language and repeated emphasis on the difficult position the Catholics found themselves in throughout Leisentrit's works suggest that the dean really perceived his fellow Catholics as persecuted. His works express a genuine concern for his flock. But it was also in Leisentrit's interest to emphasise the difficult position of the Catholics in a printed work that might make its way to other regions of the Holy Roman Empire and Bohemia.[75] As Leisentrit wanted to ensure continuing royal and imperial protection, focusing on religious conflicts rather than commenting on the many compromises both Lutherans and Catholics made in their daily dealings helped to strengthen the Catholic's position.

5   Conclusion

Leisentrit's works demonstrate how difficult it is to separate public and domestic spheres. Although men and women died in their homes, they were

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71   Ibid. 144.
72   Ibid. 145.
73   Ryrie, *Being Protestant* 460.
74   Leisentrit, *Pfarbuch* 145–146.
75   For the political position of Lusatia, see also Bahlcke, *Regionalismus und Staatsintegration*.

surrounded by relatives and friends and once they had died, the funeral could become a public display of religiosity. As Leisentrit pointed out, the deaths of individuals could later be claimed publicly by the Lutherans or the Catholics. In part because the boundaries between public and private were so fluid, the domestic sphere remained particularly hard to regulate. Leisentrit was therefore willing to be as accommodating as he could in order to ensure that people did not follow heretical beliefs. As Susan Karant-Nunn has pointed out, when it came to dying, Lutherans and Catholics shared many features.[76] Leisentrit's accommodating approach, together with the porous boundaries between public and private, throws up the question of what, precisely, a confessional, domestic sphere was.

Johann Leisentrit understood that his Catholic flock was exposed to ridicule and threats by a large group of heretics. How much of this persecution was imagined and how much of it was real is impossible to ascertain, but the sources suggest it was not as widespread or as severe as Leisentrit suggested. In Leisentrit's mind, Catholics were vulnerable and weak at the hour of their death, making them easy prey for the Devil and his minions. The private nature of sickness meant that Leisentrit was worried that Catholics, half delirious in their pain, might forsake their faith and risk the salvation of their soul. For Leisentrit, who was willing to compromise with Lutherans but remained a staunch Catholic, this equated to a dangerous victory for the heretics. While Leisentrit emphasised traditional Catholic rituals, such as the holding of a candle or the importance of extreme unction, there are also traces of Lutheranism in his works, most notably his emphasis on solace for the dying. He also hardly mentioned saints and did not refer directly to purgatory which suggests that he was influenced by Lutheranism. A Catholic dying in Upper Lusatia therefore had a difficult choice to make; whether to listen to the consoling words of Johann Leisentrit or to follow the majority of Upper Lusatians into the Lutheran faith.

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76   Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Feeling*.

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The Moriscos' Artistic Domestic Devotions Viewed through Christian Eyes in Early Modern Iberia

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After* the fall of Granada in 1492, an acculturation of Muslims took place throughout the Iberian Peninsula. The purpose was to erase their Islamic traditions and to convert them to Christianity. The policies used by various archbishops ranged from a peaceful approach to violence and mass forced baptisms. In many cases, the reaction was the opposite of the intended one: a significant Muslim population remained, practicing their own forms of piety and refusing what Iberian prelates tried to teach them, so that while they were 'officially' Christians, they developed a strong crypto-Islamic faith.

The Spanish authorities were at pains to 'correct' and change the customs of this population. One of the consequences of this was the attitude developed by this minority towards religious images: a complex issue that has been the subject of very little academic attention to date. How were images used and perceived by Moriscos (Muslim *conversos*) in Spain? Despite several studies by Felipe Pereda and Borja Franco,[1] there are as yet no studies of the material culture of this religious minority, nor any studies of the distinct artistic customs – whether Christian or otherwise – that developed during the period of interreligious cohabitation. This article attempts to develop a methodological framework for addressing this question, analysing some case studies of the art objects used by Moriscos for private devotion.

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1 Pereda F., *Las imágenes de la discordia* (Madrid: 2007); Id., "La conversión por la imagen y la imagen de la conversión: notas sobre la cultura figurativa castellana en el umbral de la Edad Moderna", in Sureda J. (ed.), *Cartografías visuales y arquitectónicas de la modernidad* (Barcelona: 2011) 228–241. Franco B., "Consideraciones sobre el uso y abuso de la imagen en la Península Ibérica en el siglo XVI a través de los procesos inquisitoriales. Una visión multicultural del arte: moriscos, protestantes y cristianos viejos", *Sharq al Andalus* 20 (2011–13) 143–66; Id., "Nuevas tendencias historiográficas en torno al uso del arte en los procesos de asimilación de la minoría morisca", *eHumanista. Journal of Iberian Studies* 1 (2013) 63–75.

One of the main difficulties of this analysis, in addition to the scarcity of contemporary sources, is their reliability. Some texts, such as the records from Inquisitorial trials, describe the use of images by Moriscos in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, as has been pointed out by Francisco Márquez Villanueva, among others, these are 'poisonous' sources.[2] Following the ideas of Carlo Ginzburg regarding the subjectivity of texts, Márquez Villanueva poses the question of how to use the trials as a useful tool for understanding the Moriscos' way of life.[3] The Inquisitorial accusations, in which there was no presumption of innocence, created several clichés, many of which still persist.[4] These sources present only two aspects of the relation between Moriscos and images: rejection and destruction or profanation. The cliché of the iconoclastic Morisco, or the disrespectful attitude towards paintings or sculptures, was legendary, circulating rapidly throughout Iberia, despite the fact that some of these cases were invented or taken out of context.[5] Most scholars have analysed these Inquisitorial trials by comparing them to several treatises that advocated the expulsion of Moriscos in order to justify political and religious decisions. But we should note that, if Moriscos destroyed altars or paintings, it was not only because their true religion (i.e., Islam) was opposed to idolatry (the argument put forward by some of the texts mentioned above); in most cases, they attacked images as a rejection of the imposed religion and as a manifestation of their rebelliousness.[6] Because of that, we should compare these sources with others that might be considered less biased, in order to reconstruct the relationship of this minority with devotional (Christian or

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2   Márquez Villanueva F., "El problema historiográfico de los moriscos", *Bulletin Hispanique* 86, 1–2 (1984) 61–135, here 114. This metaphor was also used by García-Arenal in: "Dissensió religiosa i minories. Moriscos i judeoconversos, qüestions d'identitat", *Afers* 62–63 (2009) 15–40. There is a relevant discussion about how the Inquisitorial processes should be studied. Other scholars, like Bernard Vincent, think they are not so subjective as Márquez Villanueva argues them to be. Vincent's point of view is described in detail in a compelling article in which he upholds multidisciplinary works, cautions historians and re-thinks the objectivity of this source. See Vincent B., "Convivencia difícil", in Castillo S. – Oliver P. (eds.), *Las figuras del desorden* (Madrid: 2006) 57–69.

3   Ginzburg C., "Checking the Evidence: The Judge and the Historian", *Critical Enquiry* 18, 1 (1991) 79–92.

4   The Inquisition was only a part of this creation of stereotypes because Western society enjoyed being an 'image-maker' of the 'other' for multiple and varied consumers. See Prögler J.A., "The utility of Islamic Imagery in the West. An American Case Study", *Al-Tawhid* 15, 4 (1997) 1–29.

5   See Carrasco R., *Deportados en nombre de Dios* (Barcelona: 2009) 137–142.

6   Franco B., "En defensa de una identidad perdida: los procesos de destrucción de imágenes en la diócesis de Valencia", *Goya* 335 (2011) 116–125.

Islamic) images and thereby understand how they were really perceived and understood in multicultural Iberia.[7]

We should also remember that everyday life is much more complicated than this reductionist interpretation of radical rejection would suggest. Such an interpretation might be supported by the absence of images in Morisco inventories or testaments, or even the scarce references found in the records from the Inquisitorial trials. To understand why we should be aware of the problem of simplification, it is necessary to consider that all cultures impose certain corrections on reality, simplifying the relations between human beings and everything around them into categories of knowledge that remain stagnant and unchanged for years. This is especially true of the Catholic kingdoms in the late Medieval and early modern period.[8] The main problem is not this simplification – it is perfectly natural for the human mind to resist the confrontation with the unknown – but rather that, as historians, sometimes we are not able to de-materialize these generalizations and we tend to re-objectify the behaviours and actions of our objects of study. The key to understanding this simplifications is to analyse the different ideological tendencies that created some transformations of the perceptions about the ideas exposed in the historical sources.

As a starting point, we must consider that the image of self and the image of the other cannot be perceived in the same way. This facet becomes more complicated when focusing on the contact between Christianity and Islam, which resulted in the constant creation of stereotypes about the other religion and even led to the creation of starker identities in order to resist the identity imposed by the enemy. Thus, we have an image of self that is at times the result of a reaction against its opposite, the imposed image, rather than being the result of its own essence, resulting in deformations and exaggerations that should be studied closely today. So, if we are to analyse how Christians perceived Muslims and Moriscos and compare these perceptions to reality, we should be aware of these issue. In addition, we should consider that the faith of an Aragonese Morisco was quite different from that of a Valencian, Granadino or Castilian Morisco.[9] Each had a different degree of familiarity with Islamic

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7   We follow the recommendations of Císcar about the necessity of comparing the ideas of the polemist treatises or Inquisition trials with other official and local sources closer to the life of Moriscos. Císcar E., "La vida cotidiana entre cristianos viejos y moriscos en Valencia", in Belenguer E. (coord.), *Felipe I y el Mediterráneo* (Madrid: 1999) 569–592.

8   See Tolan J., *Saracens: Islam in the Medieval European Imagination* (New York: 2002).

9   In Castile, the difference was remarkable between the Moriscos who were voluntarily converted at the beginning of the sixteenth century (old *mudéjares*) and the Granadinos, scattered throughout the territory after the War of the Alpujarras. For a comparison of the

culture, and the assimilation policy of the Spanish crown had dissimilar effects in different parts of the kingdom.[10] Furthermore, as García-Arenal has argued,[11] being a Morisco depended entirely on the choice to be one, to feel oneself as and be perceived by others as a Morisco. They were 'playing' a game. They wanted to be recognised as Moriscos by other Moriscos, but they continued to hide their behaviour because it was condemned by the Catholic monarchy. The difficulty in studying this 'game of perceptions', as we mentioned above, is that images or ideas about the 'other' tend to become stable and resist change, which presents a serious challenge for historiography, liable to be seduced by these stable perceptions, whereas real life was very different.[12] This is related to the tendency of human beings to seek cognitive consistency, to avoid discrepancies and disparities between images and the way they are perceived, on the one hand, and new information that might produce cognitive dissonance, on the other.[13]

As we pointed out before, there were different 'Moriscos' depending on the geographical area and the time period in question. This needs to be taken into consideration as we analyse not only the historical sources but also how historiography re-constructed Morisco identities through these texts. As Fuchs has argued,[14] the Moriscos were a minority that was neutralized and largely destroyed by Spanish culture. The expulsion decrees of 1609 and subsequent years attempted nothing less than to cleanse Spain finally and completely of the Moorish taint. This neutralization and the use that historiography has made of the phenomenon of religious cohabitation should be the key to a new approach to the Morisco problem. Considering these observations, we will

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reactions of the old *mudéjares* with those of the Granadinos from 1570 onwards and the differences between both groups, see Moreno F.J., *Los moriscos de La Mancha* (Madrid: 2009).

10   In fact, Ignacio de las Casas defined four kinds of Moriscos depending on their birthplace and knowledge of the Islamic faith. See El Alaoui Y., *Jésuites, Morisques et Indiens. Étude comparative des méthodes d'évangélisation de la Compagnie de Jésus d'après les traités de José de Acosta (1588) et d'Ignacio de las Casas (1605–1607)* (Paris: 2006) 126–129.

11   García-Arenal M., "El problema morisco: propuestas de discusión", *Al-Qantara* 13 (1992) 496.

12   See Bernabé Pons L., "¿Es el otro uno mismo? Algunas reflexiones sobre la identidadde los moriscos", in Franco B. – Pomara B. (eds.), *Identidades cuestionadas. Coexistencia y conflictos interreligiosos en el Mediterráneo (ss. XIV–XVIII)* (Valencia: 2016) 205–224.

13   Barkai R., *Cristianos y musulmanes en la España Medieval. El enemigo en el espejo* (Madrid: 1984) 23. See also Tieszen C.L., *Christian Identity amid Islam in Medieval Spain* (Leiden – Boston: 2013). On 'religious identity', see Bauman G., *The Multicultural Riddle. Rethinking National, Ethnic, and Religious Identities* (New York: 1999).

14   Fuchs B., *Mimesis and Empire* (Cambridge: 2001) 100.

attempt to focus on a particular case and to understand the 'image' created by Christianity of the Moriscos' private devotion.

The obligation imposed by the political authorities on Moriscos to keep images in their homes was intended to promote piety, since devotional works were considered effective educational tools. Hernando de Talavera (1428–1507), archbishop of Granada,[15] Feliciano Figueroa (1541–1609), bishop of Segorbe,[16] and the preacher Jerónimo Corella (d. 1575)[17] stated in their writings that this should be the recommended practice for the recently converted Muslim.[18] These images, visual representations of the divine, should be kept with 'veneration and decency'. This detail is essential because the records of several trials against Moriscos show that Moriscos were accused of setting the images on the floor, hanging them upside down or failing to keep them clean. Some authors, such as Clément, stated that possessing images could be considered a sign that Moriscos were abandoning their Muslim faith,[19] although we actually believe that Moriscos kept the images mainly (but not only) to avoid accusations of heresy. It is true that in several areas, like Aragon or even in some parts of Castile, there were some cases of true conversions, and we find several examples of Christian images in these homes.[20] However this was not common behaviour, as is shown by ample evidence that suggests that in general Moriscos rebelled against the imposition of Christianity, and, moreover,

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15   Archivo General de Simancas (AGS), Diversos de Castilla, *Memorial de Hernando de Talavera a los moradores del Albaicín,* book 8: 114. This was also explained in his book *Católica impugnación* (1480). See Ianuzzi I., *El poder de la palabra en el siglo XV: fray Hernando de Talavera* (Salamanca: 2009).

16   This was developed in the *Constituciones* of the Segorbe Diocese. See Saborit P., "El obispo Figueroa y la evangelización de los moriscos", *Anales Valentinos* 44 (1996) 429–445.

17   Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE). Mss. 11262/11: Corella Jerónimo, *Advertimientos sobre la conversión de los moriscos de Valencia* (1542) 277.

18   Redondo A., "El primer plan sistemático de asimilación de los moriscos granadinos: El del doctor Carvajal", in *Les Morisques et leur temps* (Paris: 1983) 113–123.

19   Clément J.F., "L'image dans le monde arabe: interdit et possibilités", in Baugé G. – Clément J.F. (eds.), *L'image dans le monde arabe* (Paris: 1995) 11.

20   Documents that mention Moriscos publicly and voluntarily praying outside of their homes are not very common, other than in testimonies from Inquisitorial trials. In Castile, such cases were more common after the Rebellion of the Alpujarras and normally involved children and young women. One of them was Lucía de Guevara, who was a child during the war. After 1571 she appeared in the Ciudad Real census, where she lived as a good Christian, praying for the souls in Purgatory, buying bulls and visiting altars. In 1574 she confessed all her children's sins to the parish priest but she still had to wait some time for definitive absolution by the Inquisition. Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN). Inquisición, leg. 2105, exp. 12. We found another case in Almagro, where a Morisco family gave some money to promote devotion to Our Lady of the Snows. See Almagro, 14.11.1612, fol. 7v.

we have no objective evidence to support the idea that there was genuine de-Islamization in those areas.

The easiest way for Moriscos to meet the political and theological obligations to display their piety through the possession of artworks was to purchase images of the Virgin Mary or to accept gifts bearing her image from priests, who made these gifts in order to indoctrinate the new converts. Hernando de Talavera commissioned a remarkable series of representations of the Virgin by a Flemish sculptor as part of his attempts to convert the *alfaquis* of Granada.[21] For Muslims, the Virgin Mary was a model of virtue, and there are documents proving the existence of brotherhoods dedicated to the Virgin made up almost entirely of converted Muslims.[22] This explains the chronicles of travellers, such as that of Münzer,[23] which point out that Moriscos kept images of the Holy Virgin and showed great devotion to them. According to Márquez Villanueva,[24] Morisco women had a particular affinity for Christianity out of a sentimental connection with the devotion to Mary that was partially shared with Islam.

We also find these ideas in other literary excerpts about the Morisco expulsion. In these texts the prayers dedicated to the images are collated, and in one of them we can read:

> May she be our shelter. / Such is her feeling / that the children in her arms / raised by her breasts / for milk gave cries. / The insignias they bore / causing great devotion, / all white covers / arranged in the Christian fashion. / Everyone knows their accounts, / they are devout rosaries.[25]

While these prayers to the Virgin might simply have been a strategy for avoiding expulsion,[26] these are not the only accounts we have of Moriscos possessing such images (without any intention of destroying or ridiculing them).

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21   See Pereda, *Las imágenes de la discordia*, especially 276–306.

22   El Alaoui, *Jésuites, Morisques et Indiens* 343.

23   Münzer H., *Viaje por España y Portugal*, transcription by J. López (Madrid: 1991) 163. See also Pereda, *Las imágenes de la discordia* 344; Magnier Heney G., "The Veneration of Images and Other Religious Polemics between Morisco and Cristiano Viejo as Reflected in Golden-Age Drama", in Temimi A. (ed.), *Actes du VI Symposium d'Études Morisques* (Tunis: 1995) 173–198, here 175.

24   Márquez Villanueva F., *El problema morisco* (*desde otras laderas*) (Madrid: 1998) 132–133.

25   Cfr. Perceval J.M., *Todos son uno. Arquetipos, xenofobia y racismo* (Almeria: 1997) 116.

26   The strategies followed by Moriscos in order to avoid expulsion were diverse and allow us to talk about individual and collective forms of resistance. Although it is not a religious but a legal example, we can mention the unusual case of Isabel Enriquez, who lived in Quintanar de la Orden, near Toledo. Her peculiar plan consisted of offering herself and her children as slaves to the brotherhood of the Virgin of Piety. In fact, in October 1610

Cervantes, in *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda*, described a Morisco holding a cross as a symbol of conversion.[27] Moreover, as we know from Francisco de Borja de Medina's work analysing Jesuit documents,[28] many converts requested, on several occasions, Christian images on 'metal plates' as a helpful aid to devotion.[29] Maybe some intended to conceal their true religion, but nevertheless it is worth noting that they requested images 'on metal', a traditional material for religious objects in the Islamic world. Such portable images on metal were not common in Christian Iberia; however, the making and possession of amulets and talismans from this material was the most visible form of Muslim religious practice. Indeed, most Moriscos were brought to trial precisely because they wore *herces*,[30] small objects which could be worn around the neck or sewn onto clothing and which contained papers with fragments of the Qur'an, religious invocations or magical symbols.[31] Another thing to keep in mind and that has been studied elsewhere is that Moriscos may have been using these representations not out of any true conversion in line with Jesuit teachings, but in keeping with the Islamic concept of *taqiyya* in order to escape the Inquisition.[32]

In the context of discussing the meaning of devotional imagery to converts, it is important to note that many Moriscos worked in trades related to the fine arts. In the *Catecheses mystagogicae* (1586) we find a list of jobs often

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(after the decree of expulsion) they went to a notary in order to regularize this arrangement. AHP To. Prot., leg. 13167: fols. 239r–240v/ 6/10/1610.

27   See Infante C., "Los moriscos y la imagen religiosa: la cruz de Rafala en el Persiles rebatiendo a los apologistas de la expulsión", *eHumanista/Cervantes* 1 (2012).

28   Medina F.B., "La Compañía de Jesús y la minoría morisca. (1545–1614)", *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 57 (1988) 3–136.

29   These documents have been analysed in several articles studying Jesuit documentations. See Franco, "Nuevas tendencias" 63–75 and Franco, "Arte y misión. San Francisco de Borja y la difusión de la doctrina católica en las Indias interiores", in García-Hernán E. – del Pilar Ryan M. (eds.), *Francisco de Borja y su tiempo. Politica, religión y cultura en la Edad Moderna* (Rome: 2011) 695–710.

30   Bernabé Pons L., *Los moriscos. Conflicto, expulsión y diáspora* (Madrid: 2009) 36; García Cárcel R., *Herejía y sociedad en el siglo XVI: La Inquisición en Valencia. 1530–1609* (Barcelona: 1980) 235.

31   These kinds of metallic objects were forbidden in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in an effort to expunge Islamic traditions from Christian society. There are several examples of these prohibitions in the *Ordenanzas de la Real Audiencia y Chancillería de Granada*.

32   The concept of *taqiyya*, or dissimulation, is one of the best-known practices of Spanish Moriscos. It allowed them to continue to observe their true faith in secret in order to avoid condemnation by the Christians, and consisted of praying to Christian images but keeping in mind Islamic concepts. On *taqiyya*, we recommend the 34th volume of the journal *Al Qantara* (2013), in which various researchers theorize this concept.

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performed by converts and, therefore, included in the *Ordenanças*. These were silk thread makers, candle makers, silver workers, painters, etc.[33] Not only can we deduce from this that Moriscos were involved in the production of Christian art and liturgical objects such as candles, some Jesuits, such as Ignacio de las Casas, indicated that Moriscos volunteered to build and decorate their own churches.[34] From all of this we know that Moriscos had first-hand knowledge of Christian imagery and even produced such imagery, which allowed them to make better use of it, either to conceal their true faith or, in the case of true converts, to enhance their piety as new Christians.

On the other hand, the best way to establish if there really were images in Moriscos' homes is to study household inventories or to look for the descriptions of their goods as declared in official documents prior to their expulsion. We should remember here that the other sources mentioned previously were literary excerpts, subjective chronicles or Jesuit texts. We should also take into account the fact that some of the references in these texts helped to create false rumours, and that other references, such as those contained in Jesuit reports, reflect the need to claim that Moriscos really were being converted, given that some other congregations, such as the Dominicans and Franciscans, had abandoned their indoctrination programme in the belief that this battle had been lost.

We should also compare the Moriscos' inventories with those of Old Christians. Over recent years, there has been a great deal of scholarly interest in analysing the latter inventories in an attempt to show how local private religiosity developed in Europe.[35]

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33   See Cantarino v., *Entre monjes y musulmanes. El conflicto que fue España* (Madrid: 1978) 234–235. Authors like Caro Baroja have proved how one of the main trades of the Moriscos of Granada was jewellery; in fact, when they were deported to Castile they brought all their knowledge of their job to the new land. Caro Baroja J., *Los moriscos del Reino de Granada* (Madrid: 2000) 137. For Castile, see Fernández-Chaves M.F. – Pérez García R.M., "Las dotes de las moriscas granadinas y sevillanas. Cambios y adaptaciones de una cultura material", in Lobo de Araujo M.M. – Esteves A. (eds.), *Tomar estado: dotes e casamentos (séculos XVI–XIX)* (Braga: 2010) 137–138; Moreno F.J., "El hogar morisco: familia, transmisión patrimonial y cauce de asimilación", *Al-Kurras* 1, 1 (2015) 97–119, here 112.

34   British Library (London), Ms. Add. 10238, Casas I. de las, *De los moriscos de España (1605–1607)* fols. 109r–110r.

35   See especially, in connection with Italy, Ajmar-Wollheim M. – Dennis F. (eds.), *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London: 2006); Thornton P., *The Italian Renaissance Interior, 1400–1600* (New York: 1991). For England, Kowaleski M. – Goldberg P.J.P. (eds.), *Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing and Household in Medieval England* (Cambridge: 2008). Finally, for Iberia, the most useful works are Christian W.A., *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton: 1981) and García Marsilla J.V., "Imatges a la llar. Cultura material i cultura visual a la València dels segles XIV I XV", *Recerques* 12 (2001) 163–194.

Manuel Lomas[36] was one of the first historians to make use of sources testifying to Castilian Moriscos' possession of multiple devotional artworks in their homes, mainly small pieces such as *Agnus Dei* in silver or coral. These pieces were very common in the Hispanic tradition, especially among women. Furthermore, the materials themselves, and the fact that they were owned by wealthy families, can be interpreted in two ways. First, as is well known, educated Muslims were the first to be converted because of the strategy followed by Hernando de Talavera in his evangelizing campaign.[37] This fact might go some way towards explaining why we have not found artworks of this kind in other areas, such as Valencia, where most of the Moriscos were peasants and tended to retain their Islamic faith, relative to Moriscos in other areas.[38] Moreover, the possession of *Agnus Dei* could be interpreted by the Inquisition as visual evidence that the owners were true Christians and that, therefore, they should not be condemned.

The second interpretation relates to the materials. As we noted above, several sources describe how Moriscos asked for metal pieces with devotional representations. Perhaps these inventories including *Agnus Dei* are proof of Moriscos' requests for images from the Jesuits and, therefore, confirm that they truly ordered small portable Christian images, and that the extant testimonies of the Society of Jesus are a reflection of reality and not merely evidence of the Jesuits' strategy for justifying their continued preaching in Iberia.

But these are not the only sources available for analysing the private Christian devotion of Moriscos. A set of unpublished probatory records in the Archivo Histórico Provincial of Ciudad Real (AHP CR) that document the assets of former residents of Granada who arrived in Ciudad Real after 1570 tell us much about the Christian images found among their property. The iconography of these objects, made mainly of precious metals, is very significant. We

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36   Lomas M., "El conde de Salazar y la expulsión de los moriscos de La Mancha", *eHumanista/ Conversos* 3 (2015) 64–86; Id., "Aixovar, diners i contraband. L'equipatge dels moriscs expulsats segons els registres de béns de Castella", *Recerques* 61 (2010), 5–24.

37   Hernando de Talavera began his evangelizing mission by meeting with *alfaquis* and members of the Muslim upper class in Granada, in the hope that, through dialogue, he could bring about the true conversion of their community.

38   The majority of scholars who have worked on Moriscos have shown that Valencia was one of the last bastions of Islam, where converts from all over the Iberian Peninsula went to learn the rudiments of the Islamic faith and even to consult books in Arabic that were there relatively accessible. Domínguez Ortiz A. – Vincent B., *Historia de los moriscos* (Madrid: 1978) 121; Ardit M., "Els moriscos valencians", in *L'expulsió dels moriscos del Regne de València* (Valencia: 1997) 6–33.

found, in the records, three small Immaculate Conceptions,[39] two canvases
of Saint Alexius,[40] one of Saint Casilda,[41] one golden crucifix[42] and another
golden angel.[43] These images do not immediately seem out of the ordinary,
but if we study their iconography in the light of the Islamic faith developed by
Moriscos in Iberia, we are led to some interesting conclusions.

To start with, the Immaculate Conception was a particularly common de-
votional image among *conversos*. Christians and Muslims shared the idea that
Mary was conceived without sin.[44] We mentioned above that devotion to the
Virgin fostered a pro-Catholic sentiment in Muslim communities, not only in
Iberia but also in other areas. Some years ago, Norman Daniel showed how
some Protestants criticized the Catholic Church for exporting this devotion
to the Islamic world.[45] So, it is understandable that when Moriscos tried to
show they were good believers, they used these visual representations to do
so, because they could use them to practise *taqiyya*. In saying this we are not
disputing that some Morisco women were genuinely converted and that they
prayed to the Virgin Mary. However, such cases are far removed in time from
the period when Talavera advocated using the Virgin in the indoctrination
of the Morisco minority, and after his campaign, few preachers employed the
same non-violent method. Taking into account this background, we can think
that Moriscos were using these representations as visual evidence of their
inner *converso* faith, and at the same time, we can ask whether real conversion
can be dismissed, since the majority of contemporary sources speak of greater

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39   AHP CR, Prot., leg. 54: fols. 147r–149v. 23/06/1594. Dowry of Ana López, Jerónimo de
     Montemayor's wife, and in two places in leg. 58bis: fols. 375r–379r. 22/11/1607. Dowry of
     Ana López, Alonso de Najera's wife.

40   AHP CR, Prot., leg. 54: fols. 263r–267r. 07/10/1594. Dowry of Elvira Enríquez, Jerónimo
     de Carmona's wife; and leg. 79–1: fols. 335r–337v. 26/03/1607. Dowry of María de la Cruz,
     Gabriel de Rojas' wife.

41   AHP CR, Prot., leg. 78/1: fols. 326r–329r. 31/12/1605. Dowry of Felipa de la Cruz, Alonso de
     Soria's wife.

42   AHP CR, Prot., leg. 72/3: fols. 174r–177r. 04/12/1605. Dowry of Isabel Hernández, Martín de
     la Fuente's wife.

43   AHP CR: Prot., leg. 47–3, fols. 88r–92v. 08/05/1609.

44   Authors like Abd-El-Jalil summarized several Islamic texts about this fact: Abd-El-Jalil
     J.M., *Cristianismo e Islam* (Madrid: 1954) 5–10.

45   The Qur'an inspires a devotion to Mary of which Muslims might have made more,
     if they had not needed to differentiate their attitude sharply from that of Catholics.
     Modernist Muslims do not like the ambiguous proclamation of her perpetual virginity.
     Protestants have sometimes liked to say that the Catholic Church acquired the dogma of
     the Immaculate Conception from Islam', Daniel N., *Islam and the West. The Making of an
     Image* (Edinburgh: 1960) 175.

progress in the Christianization of the Moriscos in Castile, mainly among those who were born after the Rebellion of the Alpujarras.

The same doubts and questions arise when we analyse the images of angels found in inventories. Both New and Old Christians venerated these special figures,[46] known in Islamic theology as *al-Malā'ika*, making it impossible for us to see this physical evidence as an indication of real Christianization.

The case of Saint Alexius' image is also important. In other Christian asset records from Castile, there do not seem to be any representations of this figure.[47] His veneration originated in the Byzantine Empire.[48] After an arranged marriage, he left his old life and his wife and set off on a pilgrimage to Rome. Alexius means 'follower of the word of God'. Like this saint, Moriscos also left their houses in Granada and travelled to other places (both within Iberia and elsewhere) following the word of (their) God. There is, thus, a parallel between the saint's life and the Moriscos' diaspora. It was probably not coincidental, then, that devotion to this Eastern saint was part of the Moriscos' faith. Perhaps they were using an ostensibly Christian object of devotion to reflect their own situation, and that is why, as indicated previously, these images appear only in Castilian *converso* inventories.

The same can be observed in the case of Saint Casilda of Burgos. She was the daughter of a Muslim king of Toledo, and was martyred because, after her conversion to Christianity, she fed the Christian prisoners in her father's jail.[49] Her

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46   On the cult of the angels and this syncretism, see Sweetman J.W., *Islam and Christian Theology* (Cambridge: 2002).

47   Although it is necessary to consult additional sources, the [probatory records or inventories]analysed in Ciudad Real show that the only two places in which Saint Alexius is mentioned are documents relating to Morisco dowries, dated 1594 and 1607, near the time of the expulsion. In both cases, the objects are clearly identified as part of the domestic furniture and are not too expensive (four *ducados*). In documents that were studied listing Old Christian dowries from nearby areas, figures such as Saint Anton or Saint Francis are frequently mentioned, but never Saint Alexius. Perhaps it is too early to reach definitive conclusions given that we are dealing with a small data set that possibly does not reflect any general trends. However, we think it is plausible that Saint Alexius held a particular attraction for Moriscos.

48   Vorágine S. de la, *La leyenda dorada* (Madrid: 1982) 378–381; Réau L., *Iconografía del arte cristiano* (Barcelona: 1997) vol. 3, 56–59.

49   Reau, *Iconografía* 271. Her case is mentioned, in the sixteenth century, by Alonso de Villegas in his *Flos Sanctorum*, first published in Toledo in 1578 but expanded and reprinted in 1582. These cases of *converso* saints are common in Iberia. Other common icons were Saint Bernardo of Alzira and his sisters, who were venerated in the Valencian area. See Rucquoi A., "Hispania, Sefarad, al-Andalus. Unidad y alteridad. Hacia una idea de Hispanidad. Discurso de ingreso de la doctora Adeline Rucquoi", *Memorias de la Academia Mexicana de la Historia* 54 (2013) 141–166.

legend was very popular, and not only among the newly converted; in fact, we have many representations of this saint from the thirteenth century right up to the early modern period. The veneration of this image might be understood as evidence of conversion, but also as another case in which Moriscos chose as objects of devotion images of Christian figures whose stories somehow reflected their own experiences.

As for the possession of crosses, these, like *Agnus Dei*, did not have a meaning that resonated with the Islamic faith. They were tools to spread the faith and emblems of Catholic belief, so it is entirely understandable that Moriscos would use them if they were attempting to demonstrate their Christianity.

Although we have found several cases of possession of Christian images in Morisco houses, this practice was condemned by other members of their communities who were opposed to conversion. The sources mention some wealthy Moriscos, such as Alatar,[50] from Valencia, who punished his servant and her husband for buying a print with a cross. In her defence, the servant said that she hoped that the Crucified One would take her to Paradise in his open arms; her master, annoyed, replied that they were fools, that the cross was merely paper, and it had no power to take anyone to Paradise. On another occasion, the male servant bought a print of the Mary of the Rosary; in response, his master beat him, repeating that the servants were spending their money on useless pieces of paper.

In fact, this kind of attitude towards prints or devotional artworks crops up in several places in the records from Inquisitorial trials, where a Morisco is accused of referring to sacred works as pieces of metal, wood, stone or paper – an expression of contempt that echoes the accusations of idolatry made by Calvinists against Catholicism.[51] Considering the Catholic theological principles, the Inquisition always used the same clichés and structures in order to condemn the newly converted; punishments and reasons for detention were standardized. As Pereda noted,[52] images were more than mere instruments of this missionary strategy; the increasing importance of sacred images in private and public devotion was the subject of a polemic with the religious authorities, and the fact that they are mentioned in both Inquisitorial trials and the inventories studied is proof that images were an important

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50   See Contreras J. – Pulido I. – Benítez R., *Judíos y moriscos* (Barcelona: 2005) 180.

51   On this topic, see Franco B., "Consideraciones sobre el uso".

52   Pereda F., "Through a Glass Darkly: Paths to Salvation in Spanish Painting at the Outset of the Inquisition", in Kessler H.L. – Nirenberg D. (eds.), *Judaism and Christian Art. Aesthetic Anxieties from the Catacombs to Colonialism* (Pennsylvania: 2011) 264.

marker of conversion, while their absence or an insufficient respect for them was a reason for condemnation.

One of the most frequent accusations levelled against Morisco piety by Old Christians was the lack of distinction between 'veneration' and 'adoration'.[53] As Tuller indicated,[54] the commandments of the Church were to be taught and then followed with detailed explanations from the twentieth chapter of the book of Exodus. Also, the use of images was explained to Moriscos so that they might venerate what was represented. Many priests saw the veneration of the saints as the last hurdle for a complete acceptance of Catholicism because this was anathema to Islam.

An exchange of accusations between Christians and Muslims had been taking place since the Middle Ages regarding the alleged idolatry of the other religion,[55] creating a situation known as 'the enemy in the mirror'. Moriscos inherited this criticism in the early modern period. According to Michael Uebel,[56] the need to represent Islam as an inferior copy of Christianity generated a whole range of parodic texts depicting Muslims as polytheistic idolaters. In Iberia, outside of the Inquisitorial trials, which will be analysed later, Moriscos were accused of this sin, not only in ecclesiastical or apologetic texts, like Pérez de Chinchon's *Antialcorano*,[57] but also in treatises on art, such as *Historia de la adoración y uso de las Santas Imágenes* (1597), a post-Tridentine treatise on images by Prades.[58]

However, in these accusations of idolatry against Muslims and Moriscos, Old Christians neglected to mention the decoration of mosques or Moorish

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53   Louis Cardaillac shows how several Moriscos made fun of this distinction, which they considered too subjective. See Cardaillac L., *Moriscos y cristianos. Un enfrentamiento polémico (1492–1640)* (Mexico: 1979) 216. Other researchers, such as Ana Echevarría, provide a more objective study on this topic. See Echevarría A., *The Fortress of Faith* (Leiden – Boston: 1999) 163. See also Barrucand M., "Les fonctions de l'image dans la société islamique du Moyen-âge", in Baugé – Clément, *L'image* 59–67.

54   Tuller J.B., *Good and Faithful Christians: Moriscos and Catholicism in Early Modern Spain* (New York: 1997) 49. On the idolatry legend, see Flori J., "La caricature de l'Islam dans l'Occident Medieval. Origine et signification de quelques stéréotypes concernant l'Islam", *Aevum* 2 (1992) 245–256.

55   Tolan, J.V., "Muslims as Pagan Idolaters in Chronicles of the First Crusade", in Blanks D.R. – Frassetto M., *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: 1999) 97–118. He develops this argument in further detail in Tolan, *Saracens* 72–73, 99. See also Echevarria, *The Fortress of Faith* 86.

56   Uebel M., "Pathogenesis of Medieval History", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 44 (2002) 47–65.

57   Pérez de Chinchón B., *Antialcorano* (Alicante: 2000) 78.

58   Prades Jaime, *Historia de la adoración y uso de las Santas Imágenes, y de la imagen de la fuente de la salud* (Valencia, Felipe May: 1597) 128.

palaces, where figurative elements do not have a prevalent role, or Islamic theology, which forbids representations of God, both of which argue against the notion of Islam as idolatrous. Moreover, certain Morisco legends which circulated in the period provided further proof of Islam's rejection of idols. One of the most popular was the tale of Carcayona,[59] a Muslim princess who reproaches her father for the possession of idols and for thus disobeying Qur'anic principles. The father, as a punishment, cuts off her hands. The moral of the tale, which often appears in *aljamiado* literature,[60] is that true Islam, and the Moriscos themselves, as crypto-Muslims, did not believe in the adoration of idols.

Now we must also look at Islamic figures venerated in Morisco homes. In several Inquisitorial trials in Valencia and Aragon this fact was mentioned, the main type of figure being metallic representations of Muhammad placed on altars.[61] Again, we encounter evidence that Christian and Islamic images in Morisco houses were made of the same material. Analysing trial documents that mention the 'adoration of Muhammad sculptures',[62] Franco understood them to be cases in which the Inquisition was merely promoting the image of Muslims as idolaters by inventing an accusation against Moriscos. Franco believed that this accusation was created out of thin air by the Inquisitorial court in order to condemn *conversos*,[63] because the way that the trial documents anthropomorphize the idols is reminiscent of a common feature in other sources from the Middle Ages, and the depiction of the prophet Muhammad included

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59   This story is analysed, but not in relation to art, by Perry, M.E., *The Handless Maiden. Moriscos and the Politics of Religion in Early Modern Spain* (Princeton: 2005); Valero, M.P., *La leyenda de la Doncella Carcayona* (Alicante: 2000); Ruiz Bejarano, B., *Praxis islámica de los moriscos aragoneses a partir del corpus aljamiado-morisco y su confrontación con otras fuentes contemporáneas,* Ph.D. dissertation (University of Alicante: 2015) 198–203. We use the edited version of this tale published in Guillén, F., *Leyendas moriscas sacadas de varios manuscritos existentes en las bibliotecas Nacional, Real y de P. De Gayangos* (Granada: 1994) 84–226.

60   According to the *Dictionary* of the Real Academia Española, the term *aljamía* comes from the Hispano-Arabic *al'aǧamíyya*, which in turn comes from the Classical Arabic *aǧamiyyah*. In the sixteenth century, it was used in the Iberian Peninsula to refer to the particular form of writing employed by the Moriscos, which used Arabic characters to transcribe Romance texts. The use of *aljamía* was far more widespread among the Moriscos in Aragon and Valencia than in Castile.

61   AHN. Inquisición. Lib. 936, 1550–1580. AHN. Inquisición. Lib. 989, 1582–1596.

62   Franco Llopis B., "Los moriscos y la Inquisición. Cuestiones artísticas", *Manuscrits* 28 (2010), 87–101.

63   Magnier also thought that the existence of these idols was really impossible. She took into account the text of the *Moriscos of Hornachos*. See Magnier, "The veneration of images" 183.

the deceitful qualities attributed to Islam by medieval Christians.[64] However, we have discovered other accusations against Moriscos who possessed sculptures of the Prophet and, furthermore, an astonishing record in which a naturalistic image of Mecca was described in an Aragonese Morisco house. With these kinds of representations, Moriscos could pray to their sacred place while living in Christian territory.[65] The records from this Inquisitorial trial describe how:

> Miguel de la Fuente, tejedor de lienços morisco vezino de la Belchite de edad de treyntayseis años que fue testificado por dos testigos christianos viejos de tener en un aposento de su cassa pintada cierta portalada que se entendia ser figura de la casa de meca, y que los moros lo suelen hazer en observancia de su secta.

> Miguel de la Fuente, a Morisco weaver of cloth and a resident of Belchite, being thirty-six years old, was reported by two Old Christian witnesses as having in his house a particular painting, which is understood to be the House of Mecca, which Moors usually do as a practice of their sect.[66]

García-Arenal[67] insisted that the best way to study Inquisitorial trials was to look for texts that do not contain formulaic writing or established clichés, as these are less likely to be cases based on trumped-up accusations but to reflect genuine Morisco practices. And while most of the trials in which Moriscos are accused of iconoclasm follow a repetitive structure, none of the examples we just mentioned show similar formulas but rather explain the sculptures and the way they were venerated in an uncharacteristic way. In light of this, we can assume that, in several Morisco homes, some Islamic icons coexisted with Christian representations, creating a hybrid space of private devotion.

In fact, we have found some commentaries from fourteenth-century Muslim theologians testifying that, even before the conquest, some Islamic houses in al-Andalus contained pictorial decoration, following the example of those in Christian territories. It is therefore easy to imagine that in the early modern

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64   Echevarría, *The Fortress of Faith* 222.
65   Ruiz Bejarano, *Praxis islámica* 272.
66   AHN. Inquisición. Libro 989, fol. 676r.
67   García-Arenal, "Dissensió religiosa" 31.

period this syncretic tradition continued,[68] as has been shown in several studies of Hispano-Islamic buildings.[69]

There is additional evidence for the existence of Islamic representations in these spaces. Lomas found textual descriptions of Morisco swords with sculptures of Muhammad on the handles,[70] and García-Arenal foregrounded the important devotion to the Prophet shown by Iberian Moriscos.[71] Additionally, in the Spanish National Library there is a Morisco manuscript containing some pictures that appear to depict a wise Muslim preacher and other images of animals and guardians, all of them related to the traditional Islamic figurative tradition.[72] Although research into this previously unknown and unpublished manuscript is ongoing, we can deduce from its contents that, in the sixteenth century, *conversos* created their own visual culture mixing Christian and Islamic artistic traditions, which suggests the existence of religious syncretism.

Moreover, we should recall that in some territories, such as Iran, there are other examples of Islamic figurative art. Events from Muhammad's life, scenes from Paradise and Hell, battles, and scenes from daily life are depicted.[73] The prohibition against depicting the Prophet is stronger in Sunni communities, but in Shi'a Islam it is possible to find illustrations and miniatures of Muhammad, especially after the fifteenth century.[74] The Ottomans

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68   'We come to the point that, when a nation is dominated by its neighbor, it manifests a vivid tendency to imitate the latter, and look like it. This is what happens in this period in al-Andalus regarding the Christian peoples of the north; Muslims try to imitate them, in their clothes, their ornaments, most of their customs and manners, to such an extent that they paint images on walls, public buildings and houses." IIbn Jaldun, *Muqaddima* (Cordova: 2008) 253.

69   There are even extant texts dating from after the conversion of the Islamic population that contain comments about the decoration of mosques, such as the description, 'bien labrada y pintada' ('well made and painted [with images]'). See Villanueva O. – Araus, L., "La identidad musulmana de los mudéjares de la Cuenca de Duero a finales de la Edad Media. Aportaciones desde la aljama de Burgos", *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma*, series 3, 27 (2014) 525–546, here 535.

70   Lomas, "El conde de Salazar" 67.

71   García-Arenal, "The converted Muslims of Spain" 48.

72   BNE, MSS/5373. *Libro de morisco sin identificar*. See http://bdh-rd.bne.es/viewer.vm?id=0000181156&page=1.

73   See Gruber C. – Shalem A. (eds.), *The Image of the Prophet between Ideal and Ideology* (Berlin – Boston: 2014); Klein F., "La representación de Mahoma: lo prohibido y lo permitido", *Nómadas. Revista crítica de ciencias sociales y jurídicas* 20, 4 (2008) 127–142; Lombardo A., "Le immagini nel mondo musulmano: quale diritto?", *Diritto & Questioni pubbliche* 8 (2008) 65–88.

74   Gutman J., *The Image and the Word. Confrontations in Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (Montana: 1977) 63.

(who were Sunni Muslims) also represented the Prophet in miniatures and illustrations. Moreover, the diaries of some medieval travelers who visited the Orient state that some mosques had gold and silver sculptures of Muhammad.[75] Lastly, Ignacio de las Casas has described Arabic inscriptions praising Allah in Christian paintings for one of the cloisters of the Cathedral of Segorbe,[76] which confirms the Moriscos' interest in art and in its meanings in the Iberian Peninsula.

All this leads us to consider the style of the Inquisitorial trials and insist that clichés are often an impediment rather than an aid when studying identities and their visual representations. Morisco houses were spaces of cohabitation where, in most cases, both religions coexisted.[77] Such houses might have some Islamic representations connected to the occupants' original religion but, at the same time and in accordance with the obligations imposed by the Church, might also have kept some Christian devotional images. These new documentary discoveries lead us to re-think private *converso* religious practices and open new avenues of study, as we attempt to understand when the Moriscos' use of images was a strategy to avoid expulsion and when such images were an indication of true conversion.

In these pages we have briefly analysed the Christian perspective on Moriscos' private religious practices and the clichés surrounding this topic that were constructed by the sources. If we consider the sacred texts of Christianity and Islam regarding art and images, we can reach conclusions different from those offered by 'official' sources or even the aforementioned inventories. Thus, there may be alternative ways of drawing borders between religious communities. It is true that when Christian authorities redoubled their attempts to prohibit any expression of Muslim culture and religion after the first expulsion of Muslims in 1502, many Moriscos, in response, transformed their homes into spaces of resistance.[78] Meanwhile other households accepted Christian art in order to avoid death or exile. It would be naïve to equate the presence of Christian art in Morisco homes with the success of the evangelization campaigns. As Belting argues: 'in this temporal piety the acquisition of a devotional image was an act of duty. In what we might describe as a domestic icon, owners acquired not only a tool for devotion but a certification of the pious disposition they were

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75   See Flori, "La caricature" 251.
76   Casas, *De los moriscos* fols. 172r–v.
77   Benjamin Ehlers defines them as neither Christian nor Muslim. See Ehlers B., *Between Christians and Moriscos: Juan de Ribera and Religious Reform in Valencia* (Baltimore: 2006) 34.
78   Perry, *The Handless Maiden* 63.

to attain. Images became visible proof of an inner life.'[79] But, at the same time, we must not forget that Moriscos were maintaining their own traditions, while adapting them to Christian requirements.

Only by re-thinking our past, taking into account the plurality of possibilities offered by newly discovered sources, may we come nearer to understanding the complex society in which Catholic power imposed one kind of visual policy and the minorities to be converted, assimilated and mixed with their own religion.

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79   Belting H., *Likeness and Presence. A History of the Image before the Era of Art* (Chicago – London: 1994) 411.

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The Unwritten Ritual: The Duality of Religion in Sixteenth-Century Chosŏn Korea

Soyeon Kim

1 Introduction

Visual materials often show things that are not seen in textual records. Buddhist paintings produced during the Chosŏn dynasty of Korea (1392–1910), whose state religion was Confucianism, constitute such visual materials. Buddhism, which had been the state religion and ruling ideology for more than eight centuries on the Korean peninsula, was considered a vestige of earlier dynasties by the founders of the Chosŏn reign, Confucian scholars. So it was natural that they try to erase the influence of Buddhism in their new dynasty. Given these circumstances, Chosŏn Buddhist paintings reveal not only the tension and conflict that existed between the two different ideologies – Confucianism and Buddhism – but also their recombination and coexistence, which are rarely discussed in historical texts from the time.

This paper aims to provide an explanation of how a Buddhist painting's patron and its iconography are intertwined with such a situation, focusing on a hanging scroll entitled *Gathering of the Four Buddhas* [Fig. 6.1] produced in 1562. First of all, I will examine the possibility that the painting was used for a mortuary ritual by considering its inscription. Then, I will look at historical shifts in the iconography of the Four Buddhas. I will provide an explanation as to how its newer meaning was deeply embedded in the ritual culture of the Chosŏn period. Lastly, this paper will investigate the historical context of several political and religious events that played a significant role in the genesis of this work. Treating the importance of the painting within the specific context of Buddhist rituals and patronage, against the background of parallel Confucian thought, will illuminate the complexity of religious and visual culture in sixteenth-century Chosŏn Korea, where official proscriptions against Buddhism were often ignored in the context of domestic devotion.

FIGURE 6.1   Anonymous, *Gathering of the Four Buddhas* (1562). Colours on silk,
90 × 74 cm. National Museum of Korea
IMAGE © NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA

2   Two Different Sources for Kwŏn's Death

The inscription of *Gathering of the Four Buddhas*, now in the National Museum of Korea, indicates that the painting was commissioned by Yi Chongnin (1538–1611) for the well-being of his late maternal grandfather, Kwŏn Ch'an (?–1560), in the afterlife. As one of only a few privately commissioned religious works showing the commissioner's intention explicitly, this painting provides vivid material evidence of someone's death and his grandson's mourning. Apart from the painting, however, there remains another historical document in connection with Kwŏn's death. According to *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* (Veritable Records of the Chosŏn Dynasty), which is an official chronological record of Chosŏn kings' historical reigns, the Chosŏn Minister of Finance Kwŏn Ch'an died on the twenty-seventh day of the ninth month in 1560. In the entry of the next day, it is written that Prince Tŏgyang (Yi Ki, 1524–1581), Kwŏn's son-in-law, had an audience with his half-brother, King Myŏngjong (r. 1545–67). Prince Tŏgyang wanted to ask the king to allow his son, Yi Chongnin, to hold funeral rites for the deceased Kwŏn Ch'an. Courtiers fiercely opposed the prince's proposal. At that time, it was forbidden for the son of one's daughter to play the role of chief mourner at a funeral, because it was considered to be against Confucian principles, and further, to be a Buddhist custom. According to Confucian dogma, only the son and heir of a family could be the chief mourner at funerals for ancestors. Moreover, Yi Chongnin was a grandson of the former King Chungjong (r. 1506–44). As a member of the royal family, he was expected to avoid acting in inappropriate ways, including serving as the heir for other families. Despite much opposition, however, King Myŏngjong acquiesced to the prince's wish, and the issue was never mentioned again.[1]

As one of two different responses to the death of Kwŏn, this entry from *Chosŏn wangjo sillok* offers an interesting case in the sense that it is not easy to examine the context surrounding a Buddhist work through an official document produced by the Confucian court, even though the painting is not mentioned. That is, two different media – a painting and an official written document – convey different stories about a historical figure who had to face his grandfather's death, and neither one mentions or even implies any reference to the other.

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1 *Myŏngjong Sillok* [Veritable Records for the Reign of Myŏngjong] (1506; reprint, Seoul: 1985–87) 109–110. All the articles from the *Sillok* quoted in this paper are based on the version that had been stored at the archive in Mt. T'aebaek.

3 Second Mortuary Ritual

Gathering of the Four Buddhas depicts four Buddhas preaching. Due to the colourful pigments, including gold, and meticulously depicted figures, it recalls the stylistic hallmarks of Buddhist painting from the previous dynasty, the Koryŏ (918–1392). However, we should focus on its inscription first, because, as we shall see, some words used here imply that the painting was produced for a Buddhist ritual. The inscription reads as follows:

> 嘉靖壬戌六月日豊 ⌐山正李氏謹竭哀悼 ⌐伏爲 ⌐先考同知權贊靈 ⌐駕淑媛李氏靈駕 ⌐牧使朴諫兩位靈駕 ⌐女億春靈駕男李 ⌐氏靈 駕共脫生前 ⌐積衆之因同證 ⌐死後修九品之果現 ⌐存祖母貞敬夫 人尹 ⌐氏保体德陽君兩 ⌐位保体成詢兩位 ⌐保体小主朴氏保体 ⌐ 李氏伯春保体李 ⌐氏敬春保体李氏 ⌐連春保体各離灾 ⌐殃俱崇福 壽亦爲 ⌐己身時無百害之 ⌐灾日有千祥之慶 ⌐壽不中大黃耉 ⌐無 疆以眞黃金 ⌐新畵成 ⌐西方阿彌陀佛一幀 ⌐彩畵四會幀一面 ⌐彩 畵中壇幀一面 ⌐送安咸昌地上 ⌐院寺以奉香火 ⌐云尓 ⌐願以此功 德普及 ⌐於一切我等與衆 ⌐生皆共成佛道

In an Imsul year, or the year of Kajŏng, in the sixth month, P'ungsanjŏng Yi mourns the death of his late father, Kwŏn Ch'an, along with Royal concubine Yi, Pak Kan and his wife, their daughter Ŏkch'un, and Gentleman Yi. May all of them reach the state of nirvana so they can recognize the causes of their misdeeds in their lifetime and become reborn in the nine grades of the pure-land afterlife. May the living grandmother Lady Yun, Prince Tŏgyang and his wife, Sŏng Sun and his wife, Young Master Pak and his wife, Yi Paekch'un, Yi Kyŏngch'un, and Yi Yŏnch'un stave off disaster and live out their allotted span of life. Further, may you live a long life while hundreds of disasters are averted time and again, and thousands of happy occasions continue day by day. We spent gold to make new paintings: a Western Amitābha painting, a coloured four [Buddhas]'s gathering painting and a coloured middle altar painting. We sent these paintings to Sang'wŏn Monastery in the Hamch'ang region. May all the merit be spread to each and all the living beings, and I hope that all living beings and I, myself, will jointly accomplish the Buddhist way.[2]

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2 The translation is the author's own.

In this inscription 'P'ungsanjŏng Yi' refers to Yi Chongnin. According to the inscription, *Gathering of the Four Buddhas* was produced alongside a 'Western Amitābha painting' and a 'middle altar painting'. That is, the painting was not created as a single work, but as one of a set of three paintings. Of the set, the latter two paintings have been lost. Noteworthy here is the fact that the last painting is called the 'middle altar painting' while the other two paintings are named after their subjects: 'Western Amitābha', meaning 'Amitābha Buddha of Western pure land', and 'Four [Buddhas]'s gathering'.

During the Chosŏn dynasty, Buddhist rituals were based on three altars: the upper altar, middle altar, and lower altar. Each altar could be built separately in different halls or together in a single hall within a monastery. Although the origin of the triple altar setting is unknown, the earliest document concerning the three altars is from the late fourteenth century, and the practice is believed to have become widely used in Buddhist ceremonies from the sixteenth century at the latest.[3]

The roles and characteristics of each of the three altars were different. The altars were dedicated to different deities. Although the manner of deciding the subjects of each altar varied according to period, region, and rituals, the upper altar was used mostly for the highest deities, such as Buddha or Bodhisattvas, while the middle altar was for deities lower than those of the upper altar. The lower altar was dedicated to dead spirits and deities who govern the underworld or who take care of the dead, such as Amitābha Buddha and his attendants.[4] Buddhist ritual manuals published in the Chosŏn period record the subjects of the three altars as shown in the following table.

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[3] In *Yangch'onjib*, Kwŏn Kŭn, a scholar of the early Chosŏn period recorded an article about the Chin'gwan Monastery built for the rite for deliverance of creatures of water and land. According to the text, the arrangement of the halls of the Chin'gwan Monastery was designed based on the 'three altar manner'. Kwŏn Kŭn, "Chin'gwansa Suryuksa Chosŏngki", in Kwŏn Kŭn, *Yangch'onjib* [Collected Works of Yangch'on] (Chinju, Kwŏn Ju:1674; reprint, Seoul: 1978).

[4] Many researchers have explained the object of worship at each altar differently. Hong Yunsik has suggested that the upper altar is for both Buddha and the Bodhisattvas, while Yu Mari has said that the Bodhisattvas were the object of the middle altar. The reason for the differences might have been the flexibility in the iconography of the three altars. Hong Y., *Han'guk purhwa ŭi yŏn'gu* (Seoul: 1980); Yu M., "Chosŏnjo ŭi t'aenghwa", in Kim Y., *Chosŏn purhwa* (Seoul: 1984) 188–204.

TABLE 6.1 Three altars prescribed in the Buddhist ritual manuals published in the Chosŏn period

Buddhist Ritual Manual	Upper altar	Middle altar	Lower altar
『水陸無遮平等齋儀撮要』 (1573, Tŏkchu Monastery)	Countless Buddhas and Sages	Three Realms and the Four Palaces	Underworld and the Realm of Ghosts
『法界聖凡水陸勝會修齋儀軌』 (1573, Kongnim Monastery)	Countless Buddhas and Sages	Devayana Avalokiteśvara, Dhranimdhara, and Kṣitigarbha	Amitābha Avalokiteśvara, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta
『預修十王生七齋儀纂』 (1576, Kwanghǔng Monastery)	Three Bodies of the Buddha	Kṣitigarbha and Demon King No-poison	Śakra and Four Heavenly Kings
『天地溟陽水陸齋儀纂要』 (1694, Hae'in Monastery)	Countless Buddhas and Sages	Three Realms and the Four Palaces (Devayana Avalokiteśvara, Dhranimdhara, and Kṣitigarbha)	Underworld and the Realm of Ghosts (Amitābha Avalokiteśvara, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta)
『冊補梵音集』 (1713, Pohyǒn Monastery)	Vairocana (*Pirosana*), Vairocana (*Nosana*), and Śākyamuni	Buddhas of the ten directions, Dharma of the ten directions, and Sangha of the ten directions	Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta
『天地冥陽水陸齋儀梵音刪補集』 (1723, Unknown)	Vairocana (*Pirojana*), Vairocana (*Nosana*), and Śākyamuni	Devayana Avalokiteśvara, Dhranimdhara, and Kṣitigarbha	Amitābha, Avalokiteśvara, and Mahāsthāmaprāpta

As seen in the table, the objects of worship for each altar in the Buddhist ritual manuals followed a general pattern. These details were applied flexibly and the dedications could vary but most of the deities seen in the table were generally worshipped and so could be consecrated for any reason.

When a Buddhist ceremony was held, people enshrined Buddhist paintings as objects of worship, like Buddha statues. As a result, the concept of the three altars for Buddhist ceremonies was also applied to Buddhist paintings. Each of these paintings was called *sangdan-t'aeng* (upper altar painting), *chungdan-t'aeng* (middle altar painting), or *hadan-t'aeng* (lower altar painting). Just as the dedications of the three altars were changeable, the themes of these paintings were not fixed either. Because the titles of altar paintings were based on function rather than theme, a variety of Buddhist deities could be depicted in the images.

The fact that *Gathering of the Four Buddhas* is a painting from a set of three, and that one among them is referred to as a 'middle altar painting' suggests that all three paintings functioned as ritual paintings, even though two paintings are not explicitly called 'altar painting'.[5] If the three paintings were designed for three altars, *Gathering of the Four Buddhas* could have been an upper altar painting because the Four Buddhas often means 'Countless Buddhas'. The 'Western Amitābha painting' might have been the lower altar painting. In other words, the term 'middle altar painting' used in the inscription implies that these paintings were destined for a kind of ritual. And due to the inscription saying that the painting was for the late Kwŏn Ch'an, it is highly probable that the rite for the salvation of Kwŏn Ch'an was held two years after his death, when the painting was produced, and that the paintings, including *Gathering of the Four Buddhas*, were used for this rite.

An expression quoted in the inscription provides further evidence that the painting was used for a Buddhist rite. In the inscription the names of the dead and the living are listed, along with a blessing for each of them. Among these, it is worth noting the following: 'hundreds of disasters are averted time and again, and thousands of happy occasions continue day by day'. This phrase appears to be just an ordinary prayer for fortune and peace. However, it is noteworthy that this phrase is still used in Korean Buddhist ceremonies even in modern times. The oldest known example of this sentence can be found in *Na'am chapchŏ* (The Miscellaneous Works of Na'am) written by monk Pou (penname

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5   While many paintings called 'chungdan-t'aeng' in their inscription remained, paintings named 'sangdan-t'aeng' or 'hadan-t'aeng' are very few in number for an unknown reason. In case of the latter, paintings were named after their theme.

Na'am, 1509–1565). We can find the phrase in his ceremonial works, including the 'Oral Text Read in the Ritual for the Repairing of the Pong'ŭn Monastery' and the 'Oral Text Read in the Ritual for the Salvation of King Injong'. This phrase was not often quoted in other contemporary works, but it came to be used frequently in later works such as *Samyŏngdang taesajip* (1652), *Pŏmŭmjip* (1723) and *Sŏngmun ŭibŏm* (1936).

From the sixteenth to the twentieth century, from *Na'am chapchŏ* to *Sŏngmun ŭibŏm*, this phrase was used in the same context, with very few changes to its original form. That is, the phrase appeared only in ceremonial situations. It is unclear whether Pou created the phrase or quoted it from other documents that no longer exist. However, judging from the fact that Pou was the most influential monk in sixteenth-century Chosŏn Korea, and was supported by the Queen Dowager Munjŏng, 'Pou's phrase' may well have become an idiom.

Ultimately, the phrase was recorded in Buddhist ceremony manuals which are still used to this day. Yet *Gathering of the Four Buddhas* is the only extant example in which Pou's phrase is included in the inscription of a painting. Given the fact that this ceremonial phrase was written on a painting, the painting seems thereby to be closely related to Buddhist ritual. The writer of the inscription may have referred to other inscriptions and contemporary oral ritual texts. Because *Gathering of the Four Buddhas* was a court painting ordered by a member of the royal family, it is not difficult to imagine that the writer of the inscription working for the court could easily access the texts for rituals written by Pou, who at one time enjoyed the support of the court. It may also mean that the painting was used in a ceremonial context.

In sum, the inscription suggests that the painting was used during a second ritual for Kwŏn Ch'an. Thus, the funeral, which was a source of controversy at court, was held right after Kwŏn's death, while the Buddhist rite for Kwŏn's salvation was held two years later. The second ritual left its mark on the inscription, but not in official historical records.

4　Four Buddhas in Korean History

We can also ascertain the situation surrounding the creation of the painting and its ceremonial uses by examining the subject of the painting itself. Although religious images are generally recognized and produced on the basis of religious scriptures, the iconography of a Buddhist artwork does

not always closely follow the Buddhist scriptures. Sometimes iconographic transformation happens in response to changes in the worshippers' actual beliefs that prevail over orthodox principles. Buddhist ritual manuals can be perceived as evidence of this phenomenon.[6]

The subject of *Gathering of the Four Buddhas* is an interesting case that can be explained by ritual manuals rather than orthodox documents. The topic of the painting is the 'Four Buddhas'. In the upper left section we see Amitābha Buddha, surrounded by Eight Bodhisattvas.[7] Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha, holding a medicine case, is seated on the upper right, and Śākyamuni Buddha with his ten disciples is depicted on the lower left side of the painting. The Buddha in the lower right side does not have any specific attributes or gestures that would give us a clue to his identification. Through comparison with other paintings and sculptures, the assumption that this Buddha is Maitreya Buddha, who is the future Buddha, has commonly been accepted.[8]

The theme of the Four Buddhas, composed of Amitābha, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Śākyamuni, and Maitreya, has a long tradition in Korean art. The composition started to appear in the sixth century, as seen in the Buddhas facing in four cardinal directions such as *Four-sided Buddha* (四面佛) [Fig. 6.2].[9] It seems that *Four-sided Buddha* is a non-orthodox icon that has nothing to do with an orthodox scripture, but has an unknown alternative source. The notion of Four Buddhas continued until the early Chosŏn period, as attested by various contemporary historical documents.[10]

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6   Most of the Buddhist ritual manuals that I would like to refer to as evidence in this paper were published in the late Chosŏn period. These manuals are the embodiment of many actual Buddhist rituals formed and developed over hundreds of years; they not only reflect the characteristics of worship of the past and of contemporaneous times, but have also served as the standard-bearers of Buddhist rituals to this day.

7   Bodhisattva is the term for someone who pursues awakening. In the Buddhist pantheon, as high deities but lower than Buddha, Bodhisattvas are often depicted as attendants of Buddha. Eight Bodhisattvas comprised of Mañjushri, Avalokiteśvara, Vajrapāṇi, Maitreya, Kṣitigarbha, Ākāśagarbha, Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin, and Samantabhadra are one of the attributes of Amitābha Buddha.

8   The unidentified Buddha is Maitreya Buddha, as is evident from similar works such as *Gathering of six Buddhas* housed in Sairai Monastery in Japan, and this is the commonly accepted view. National Museum of Korea, *Pleasant Encounter with Recently Acquired Collections* (Seoul: 2000) 194; Pak Ǔ., *Chosŏn chŏngi purhwa yŏn'gu* (Seoul: 2008) 77.

9   It is different from the Buddhas of the Four Directions (四方佛), associated with the Vajrasekhara Sutra.

10   According to *Yangch'onjib*, written in the fifteenth century, there was a mountain called 'Sabul' (Four Buddhas) in Kyŏngsang Province in the fourteenth century. The mountain was named after a cube-shaped stone carved with four Buddhas on each side located on top of the mountain. Also, an anthology of the fifteenth century titled *Tongmunsŏn*

FIGURE 6.2 Anonymous, Stone Buddhas in Four Directions at Kulbul Monastery Site (Unified
Silla Period). Height 350 cm. Kyŏngju, Korea
PHOTO TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR

When it comes to examples from the sixteenth century, however, the charac-
teristics of the Four Buddhas as directional Buddhas have largely disappeared,
as we see in the *Gathering of the Four Buddhas*, whose main Buddhas are
placed without regard for the four cardinal directions. A set of four hundred
Buddhist paintings which were painted at about the same time as *Gathering
of the Four Buddhas* is another example bearing witness to this tendency.
In 1565, the Queen Dowager Munjŏng, the mother of King Myŏngjong, sup-
ported a Buddhist project for her dead grandson Sunhoe, who had been the
crown prince. Hoping for the late prince's comfort in the afterlife, the birth of
a new prince and peace in the royal family, the Queen ordered the production
of four hundred Buddhist paintings. These four hundred paintings included
a hundred Amitābha paintings, a hundred of Bhaiṣajyaguru, a hundred of

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illustrates the pagoda of Anyang Monastery where the four sides of the inner walls were
decorated with four Buddhas. "Sabulsan Mirŭksa chungch'ang'gi", in Kwŏn, *Yangch'onjip*;
"Kŭmju Anyangsa t'ap chungsin'gi", in Sŏ Gŏjŏng et al., *Tongmunsŏn* (1478; reprint, Seoul:
1968).

Śākyamuni, and a hundred paintings of Maitreya.[11] The paintings were used for court-sponsored Buddhist rites and were then distributed all over the country. One of the characteristics of these four hundred paintings that differs from prior Buddhist art representing the four Buddhas is that there is no visual indication of directions. Taken as a whole, the four hundred paintings depict the Four Buddhas. However, the Four Buddhas are not painted on one scroll, but as individual paintings depicting a Buddha flanked by two Bodhisattvas [Fig. 6.3]. That is, once they had been distributed and enshrined at different monasteries, any clue as to their identity as the Four Buddhas disappeared. Each was seen as an individual painting showing an assembly of a Buddha.

This way of visualizing the Four Buddhas differs significantly from earlier representations, such as the stone relief from the sixth century, which includes features indicating directional alignment by depicting four Buddhas on each face of a cube-shaped space [Fig. 6.2]. The Four Buddhas, originally placed on three-dimensional objects and representing the spatial orientation of the iconography, gradually started to appear in two-dimensional works, and, finally, were separately depicted on single paintings. This means that the directional aspect of the Four Buddhas, projecting their divinity outwards, was ultimately diminished. Rather, by sending these paintings to Buddhist monasteries all over the country, Queen Dowager Munjŏng used them as a means of demonstrating another meaning of these icons; spreading the four hundred Buddha's 'pure lands' reveals the notion of multi-Buddha: that there are myriad Buddhas in myriad lands.

5   Four Buddhas as Multi-Buddhas in the Chosŏn Period

The image of Four Buddhas underwent an expansion in its meaning during the Chosŏn period. This shift in meaning from the Buddha facing in four directions to multi-Buddhas is reflected in Buddhist ritual manuals of the late Chosŏn period. Each name of the Four Buddhas is referred to in these records, such as *Hyŏnhaeng pŏp'oe yech'am ŭisik* (1709) and *Chakpŏp kwigam* (1827), as texts to be orally recited. According to these texts, the Four Buddhas were recited in the context of certain ceremonial events: for example, when holding a

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11   Of the four hundred paintings, only six remain in existence today. The original number of paintings is known due to the inscriptions on the paintings. According to *Myŏngjong Sillok*, Much'a taehoe or Ceremony of Giving Alms to all the Assembly including monks and laymen was held in commemoration of the repairs done to Hoe'am Monastery. *Myŏngjong Sillok* 40. It is suggested that the monastery was embellished with the four hundred paintings.

FIGURE 6.3   Anonymous, *Bhaiṣajyaguru Triad* (1565). Gold on silk,
54.2 × 29.7 cm. National Museum of Korea
IMAGE © NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KOREA

ceremony on the first day of the new year, or when listing the commandments of Buddhism. At the time, devotees recited the names of various deities, respecting their hierarchical position:

南無本師敎主 釋迦牟尼佛
南無東方敎主 藥師琉璃光佛
南無西方敎主 阿彌陀佛
南無當來敎主 彌勒尊佛
[…]

Homage to the original teacher, Śākyamuni Buddha.
Homage to the master of the Eastern region, the Radiance of Glass
    Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha.
Homage to the master of the Western region, Amitābha Buddha.
Homage to the future master, Maitreya Buddha.
[…]

CHAKPŎP KWIGAM[12]

In the lists of deities that were recited like a mantra, the Four Buddhas – Śākyamuni Buddha, Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha, Amitābha Buddha, and Maitreya Buddha – were placed at the top. Subsequently, the names of another set of Twelve Buddhas (*Ch'amje ŏpjang Sibijonbul*) were recited. Names of other deities followed. In this context, the Four Buddhas are not simply the Buddhas representative of each cardinal direction, but the supreme deities recited first among all the different kinds of Buddhas extant in the universe and other Buddhist deities. In other words, the concept and meaning of the Four Buddhas underwent a transformation.

Indeed, in the late Chosŏn period, there were many forms of the Buddha representing Buddhas extending in all directions and across three periods of time. The long tradition of the Four Buddhas had become one of these forms. Specifically, the Four Buddhas were not the deities referred to in orthodox Buddhist scriptures, but were instead the non-orthodox deities that had been celebrated by public worship: popular belief had made possible an extension and transformation of the iconography. Viewed from this perspective, it is no wonder that the Four Buddhas became the subject of the upper altar rather than 'the Three Bodies of the Buddha' or 'Countless Buddhas and Sages' referred to in many ritual manuals. Various forms of multi-Buddhas could replace each other in multiple ways.

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12   Paekp'a kŭngsŏn, *Chakpŏp kwigam: Hanguk pulgyo chŏnsŏ*, vol. 13 (Seoul: 1989) 583.

As we have seen earlier, unlike the Four Buddhas of the past, they were at the time referred to in ritual manuals as the highest deities among many, whose names were recited by Buddhists during rituals. Considering the fact that the deity was familiar to many, it is possible that the Four Buddhas were a popular subject for ritual chanting for general prayers even before the Chosŏn period, although no evidence of this has come to light. However, the ritual manuals of the late Chosŏn period are solid evidence revealing that the Four Buddhas, despite never having been documented in the Buddhist canon, were nonetheless included in more popular and practical forms of worship, through ritual. Consequently, conceptual and visual representation of the Four Buddhas was adapted in a flexible manner via the practices of Buddhist worship. *Gathering of the Four Buddhas* bears witness to this long-term transformation. In this regard, it seems probable that the Four Buddhas functioned as a main Buddha in ceremonies for the dead, which were the most popular Buddhist rituals in sixteenth-century Chosŏn.

6   'Following Confucianism in Public, Following Buddhism in Private'

Thus far, I have tried to reconstruct the specific context in which the second mortuary ritual held for Kwŏn Ch'an used *Gathering of the Four Buddhas*. At this point, the question can be raised: why did Yi Chongnin hold two different kinds of ceremonies for Kwŏn Ch'an, one Confucian, the other Buddhist? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to examine the religious and funerary practices of the Chosŏn period.

Confucianism was the reformist state ideology upon which the Chosŏn dynasty was founded. It is natural that many Chosŏn rulers adopted anti-Buddhist policies to remove the influence of Buddhism as an old political power. For example, King T'aejo (r. 1392–98) expropriated the property and servants of Buddhist temples. Buddhist monks were barred from entering the capital city during the reign of King Sejong (r. 1418–50), and the state examination for Buddhist monks was abolished in the sixteenth century. Moreover, the various harmful effects of Buddhism were a subject of constant discussion among Chosŏn era intellectuals.

Nevertheless, many Chosŏn era historians today explain this period of anti-Buddhist sentiment with the phrase, 'Following Confucianism in public, following Buddhism in private.'[13] This points to a situation where Confucianism

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13   For example, Ch'oe C., "Chosŏn chŏn'gi chong'gyo honhap kwa panhonhapju'ŭi", *Chong'gyo yŏn'gu* 27 (2007) 37–81.

was the official ideology of the state, but Buddhism still exerted considerable influence. Even Confucian scholar-officials who criticized Buddhism in public had an ambivalent attitude toward Confucianism and many practised Buddhism in private.

向者卒左議政柳廷顯言於予曰 水陸齋 僧誦經闕內 甚爲不可 請罷之 予從其言 卽罷誦經 若水陸之設 其來尚矣 不可遽革 予不卽從之 厥後廷顯臨終 囑飯佛齋僧之費於其子璋 幾至五千餘石 人皆笑之 今人於朝廷 則以禁神祀爲言 退家則惑於神祀者頗多.

One day, the late first vice-premier Yu Chǒnghyǒn said to me, 'Holding the Suryuk-jae ritual [a rite for the deliverance of creatures of water and land] and chanting the Buddhist scriptures in the court should be prohibited […]'. When Yu died, in his will he asked his son, Yu Chang, to make an offering to Buddha. Yu Chang then spent 5,000 bags of rice to hold a Buddhist ritual, so people laughed at him. Recently, there has been an increase in people like Yu, who claim that rituals for ghosts should be banned in the court, but who are obsessed with the issue privately.[14]

Such domestic beliefs were clearly visible in popular rituals. Although Confucianism held a dominant position in the dispute between Confucianism and Buddhism, Buddhist beliefs in general seem not to have suffered greatly, and many documents attest to the fact that any number of Buddhist rituals took place in the early Chosŏn period.[15]

Specifically, Buddhist rituals maintained considerable influence over funeral services for the dead. Throughout the ages, mortuary culture has been closely related to a culture's view of the afterlife or spirit. Of course, when a country's religion undergoes radical transformation, all things based on that religion, including views of the afterlife and mortuary culture, are also transformed. Sometimes such transformations are accelerated by the system of government and government policies. Yet changes usually occur at a very slow pace. Thus it was natural for early Chosŏn people to continue to hold Buddhist ceremonies for their ancestors and to make offerings to the temple as they had

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14   *Sejong Sillok* [Veritable Records For The Reign of Sejong] (reprint, Seoul: 1970) 371. The translation is by the author.

15   The *Sillok* contain a great number of passages criticizing the holding of Buddhist rituals while other passages show that the court constantly tried to settle regulations concerning funerals. This reflects the phenomenon that people preferred Buddhist customs when holding funerals, contrary to official policy. In fact, people and even the royal family carried out Buddhist rituals.

done during the Koryŏ period, hoping that their dead parents would be reincarnated in the Buddhist paradise.[16] This situation resulted in an institutional encouragement of Confucian funeral rites and a crackdown on non-Confucian (Buddhist) funerals.[17] For example, the Suryuk-jae ritual was abolished several times at court, and anything considered to be 'Buddhist in nature', like cremation, was prohibited (however, the Suryuk-jae ritual was frequently reinstated, and by the sixteenth century many people flouted the prohibition against cremation).

The dilemma surrounding religion and funerals was even a problem for the royal family. Despite the fact that the Chosŏn court made Confucianism the official state ideology, royal family members constantly supported Buddhism. Some kings engaged in Buddhist projects, and queens and royal concubines often commissioned Buddhist paintings or held Buddhist rituals in the palace. These actions can be understood not only as a representation of the personal beliefs of particular rulers, but also as strategies to strengthen royal authority. Either way, these practices often sparked strong opposition from Confucian scholar-officials.[18] Conflicts over Confucianism and Buddhism and confusion over the standard ideology lasted well into the late sixteenth century, and also affected the country's legal system. Thus, we can say that the sixteenth century, when Yi Chongnin wished to perform a funeral service for Kwŏn Ch'an, was a period of religious transition in which anti-Buddhist and pro-Buddhist notions coexisted, and different religions and ideologies took the initiative in different areas.

After all, Yi Chongnin held two funerals, both Confucian and Buddhist, for his maternal grandfather. Due to a lack of evidence, Yi Chongnin's personal beliefs and thoughts are unknown. Nonetheless, the existence of *Gathering of the Four Buddhas* shows that he was by no means free from the mixed religious culture of the time. Because of his actions, Yi Chongnin was called to account by the royal court, even in such a private area as a family member's funeral, because he, a member of the royal family, was required to follow

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16   Regarding the situation where people tended to maintain their traditional religious attitude, the idea of Wendy Doniger who mentions the conservatism of ritual is worthy of reference: Doniger W., *Other Peoples' Myths: The Cave of Echoes* (reprint, Chicago: 1995) 125–126.

17   See Han H., "Chosŏn chŏn'gi changne munhwa wa Kuihusŏ", *Chosŏn sidaesa hakbo* 31 (2004) 39–78.

18   Sometimes, however, Buddhist practices were combined with notions of loyalty or filial piety, and could thus be considered a way to support Confucian ideology. For Buddhist art and its Confucian meaning, see Kang H., "Chosŏn chŏn'gi pulgyo wa yŏsung ŭi yŏkal", *Asia yŏsŏng yŏn'gu* 41 (2002) 269–313.

Confucian dogma. Although holding funeral rites for a maternal grandfather could itself have been regarded as 'Buddhist behaviour', he nonetheless pushed ahead with his plan. Not satisfied even with that, he then performed another memorial ceremony in the traditional Buddhist manner. It is possible that Yi was comforted by the potentially magical effects of the Buddhist ritual. In any event, it is natural, given the political climate, that the second ritual was not recorded in any form and almost forgotten. However, it still reveals itself to us through the Buddhist material culture of the time, despite its absence from written documents.

7   Conclusion

According to the inscription, the patron offered *Gathering of the Four Buddhas* and two other paintings to the Sang'wŏn Monastery in Hamch'ang, the hometown of Kwŏn Ch'an. The second ancestral rite may have been held in the Sang'wŏn monastery, which was most probably the family temple for the Kwŏns of the Andong area, but was destroyed for unknown reasons between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.[19] A man from the royal family using Buddhist paintings to honour his dead ancestor can be easily understood as a typical example of Buddhist patronage. However, given that the man caused a dispute over his mourning practice, the absence of written documents about his practice in Buddhism implies that it might have been hidden. In this regard, some artworks or relics for which no relevant documents exist may contain evidence of historical importance revealing the existence of practices or beliefs that did not follow prescribed regulations and that were therefore suppressed or hidden.

Religious beliefs and rituals are indispensable to each other. Thus, religious art reflecting actual domestic belief is often more closely related to ritual than to orthodox principles or texts. The inscription and iconography of *Gathering of the Four Buddhas* reveal that the intention of the patron was to mourn his late ancestor by holding a Buddhist ritual. This is a kind of domestic practice which was not written in the official records. Exploring rituals of the past by examining relics and religious objects from a modern perspective

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19   *Sinjŭng dongguk yŏjisŭngnam* or *The Revised and Augmented Survey of The Geography of Korea*, printed in 1530, records Sang'won Monastery in Hamch'ang. However, after the eighteenth century, the monastery disappeared from maps and geography books. Sang'won Monastery might have been destroyed before the eighteenth century due to war or other upheavals.

can illuminate hitherto unknown stories of Chosŏn Buddhist art. This paper is one such attempt.

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PART 3

Family Life

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Between Home and Sufi Convent: Devotional Book Use in Early Modern Damascus

Torsten Wollina

1 Introduction

Research on domestic devotion in premodern Muslim societies is still in its infancy and no study has yet been devoted explicitly to the subject. For instance, Daniella Talmon-Heller laments in her book *Islamic Piety in Medieval Syria* that the 'regrettable absence of chapters on religiosity at […] the private home is due to the dearth of relevant source material'.[1] Nevertheless, she frequently refers to domestic practices throughout the book. Likewise, they have been hinted at for quite some time by historians of architecture, literature, economy, childhood, family, medicine, gender, mysticism, and law.

Lamentation over a lack of certain source genres has accompanied Middle Eastern History from its humble beginnings and is, in the context of domestic practices, readily repeated. Yet, that the home was a site of devotional activities stands to reason. Even religious scholars advised believers to perform certain devotions at home instead of in public places. Women would usually perform their prayers at home. Recent studies by Marion Katz and others have shown both that domestic devotional practices were a ubiquitous – albeit elusive – phenomenon and that they can, to a certain extent, be reconstructed with the help of an eclectic array of sources.[2] The real issue at hand is not a dearth of sources but a lack of means to access them systematically. Large, even unknown, quantities of pertinent texts remain in manuscript form, held in collections dispersed all over the world and often insufficiently catalogued. This obstacle stands even in the face of current digitization projects, because proper cataloguing and indexing of the digitized manuscripts is often

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1 Talmon-Heller D., *Islamic Piety in Medieval Syria: Mosques, Cemeteries and Sermons under the Zangids and Ayyubids (1146–1260)* (Leiden – Boston: 2007) 2.
2 Katz M., *The Birth of the Prophet Muhammad: Devotional Piety in Sunni Islam* (London: 2007); Katz M., *Prayer in Islamic Thought and Practice* (Cambridge: 2013); Katz M., *Women in the Mosque: A History of Legal Thought and Social Practice* (New York: 2014).

neglected due to a lack of funding. This, however, would prove instrumental in order to approach a peripheral research subject such as domestic devotion in any breadth or depth. Otherwise, we run the risk of reproducing the 'publication bias' that results from the fact that a large part of the texts selected to be published in modern editions are focused on political and communal activities, which thus perpetuates the impression that no sources are available to permit adequate study of Muslim domestic devotion.

Yet, even in the published sources, glimpses of domestic devotional activities are relatively frequent, if terse on the actual practices. Legal and advice literature deals with them from a prescriptive position, and even the historiographical genres address them, at least as far as they were of general interest: in cases of illicit behaviour, 'strange occurrences' (*ajāʾib/gharāʾib*), or semi-public rituals (wedding, childbirth, death, reception of guests), their gaze turns towards domestic settings.[3] Partly drawing on these sources, Katz has shown that the *mawlid* festivities on the Prophet's birthday were from early on also celebrated in domestic settings. By the fifteenth century, the *mawlid* had also become 'a common, although far from universal, component' of wedding and circumcision festivities.[4]

Katz brings to light a crucial source for our topic: the journal the fifteenth-century Damascene notary Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq (d. 1509) kept for over twenty years (1480–1501).[5] Neither an important nor a remarkable person himself, Ibn Ṭawq stands out from his contemporaries in that he kept his journal diligently and in that it actually survived despite never being bound in a codex. As a unique example of a probably much wider cultural practice,[6] it offers insights into many aspects of domestic devotion, including the age-old custom that a pious man should sleep in the bed of newly-weds for three days before their wedding, and domestic prayers and Qurʾān recitations in the house of his

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3 For one exception, see Guo L., "Al-Biqāʿī's Chronicle: A Fifteenth Century Learned Man's Reflection on his Time and World", in Kennedy H. (ed.), *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt* (*c. 950–1800*) (Leiden – Boston: 2001) 121–148; Guo L., "Tales of a Medieval Cairene Harem: Domestic Life in al-Biqāʿī's Autobiographical Chronicle", *Mamlūk Studies Review* 9, 1 (2005) 101–121.

4 Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet* 67, 70, citation from 72.

5 Wollina T., "Ibn Ṭawq's Taʿlīq. An Ego-Document for Mamlūk Studies", in Conermann S. (ed.), *Ubi Sumus? Quo Vademus? Mamluk Studies - State of the Art*, Mamluk Studies 3 (Göttingen: 2013) 337–362.

6 Makdisi G., "The Diary in Islamic Historiography: Some Notes", *History and Theory* 25, 2 (1986) 173–185; Wollina T., "The Samuel Pepys of Damascus? Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq and the Arabic Diary Tradition", paper presented at the Second Annual Symposium on Medieval and Renaissance Studies, St. Louis University, 19 June 2014.

mentor and relative (through marriage) Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī ʿAjlūn.[7] An account of deathbed piety stands out for the intensity of the emotions it conveys. This is the description of the rituals Ibn Ṭawq and others performed in the last hours of Muḥibb al-Dīn, a cousin of Taqī al-Dīn:

> In the morning, Qāḍī Muḥibb al-Dīn lay on his deathbed (*dīwān al-muḥtaḍirīn*). He died shortly before sunset. I entered with Kamāl al-Dīn [and four other persons]. We recited for him the Sūra [Yā-sīn] and performed the *dhikr* [ritual invocations of God's names]. Then I stepped outside. My compassion was too great to look at him. There I encountered the shaykh [Taqī al-Dīn] who had just arrived. I pulled him down to sit on the bench. Then [Muḥibb al-Dīn] died, may God be merciful with him![8]

The instances in which Ibn Ṭawq addresses domestic devotion usually appear isolated and mostly stand apart from the rather communal focus of his journal. Often his accounts are restricted to a (selective) list of attendants or/and dishes served, if the occasion was a festive one. This article, however, will address Ibn Tawq's reports on devotional usages of books or texts. Although he rarely addresses the issue directly, his notes on book circulation allow conclusions about how devotional book use connected devotional practices in domestic and other settings. Moreover, he gives insight into a rather ubiquitous circulation of objects, which is occasionally hinted at in other sources as well. As indicated above, devotional use of books was considered by religious scholars as something that could be beneficial as well as detrimental to the community of believers. Domestic book use by laypeople was regarded as potentially dangerous if not guided by the knowledgeable. On the other hand, to a large extent, domestic book use depended on endowed libraries, which were usually lending libraries, offering access to (devotional) books to a larger public. It is in this context that we should evaluate Ibn Ṭawq's reports on the subject.

The emergence of 'published' prayer books seems to have occurred contemporaneously with the rise of the *mawlid* and Prophetic devotion more generally.[9] The genre's most successful emanation was certainly the *Dalāʾil al-Khayrāt* by the Maghribī Sufi al-Jazūlī (d. 1465–70), which reached the eastern

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7 Ibn Ṭawq Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad, *Al-Taʿlīq. Yawmiyyāt Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq. Mudhakkirāt kutibat bi-Dimashq fī awākhir al-ʿahd al-mamlūkī*, ed. J. al-Muhājir, 4 vols. (Damascus: 2000–2007) vol. 1, 548; vol. 2, 584.

8 Ibn Ṭawq, *al-Taʿlīq* vol. 2, 615.

9 For examples or precursors from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet* 144; Ibn al-ʿArabī, Muḥyī al-Dīn, *The Seven Days of the Heart. Awrād al-usbūʿ*

half of the Mediterranean only by the middle of the seventeenth century, but by the nineteenth century was known as far away as Indonesia. The *Dalāʾil* is clearly 'organised as a manual for Muḥammad devotion'.[10] Throughout it features full vocalization to enable correct reading. It states itself that it omits the 'chain of transmission, [so] it becomes easier to master [the prayers] in recitation, and [recitation] is most important in coming close to the Lord of the two worlds'.[11] Starting in the seventeenth century, copies also contained illustrations of the Prophet's grave in Medina and later also the Kaʿba in Mecca [Fig. 7.1]. In their design these prayer books clearly point towards a new quality of Muslim domestic devotion in the Ottoman period, which has not yet been examined beyond the *Dalāʾil* itself.[12]

The *Dalāʾil* was predated by other devotional texts concerned with the veneration of the Prophet.[13] The so-called Mantle Ode (*qaṣīdat al-burda*), a praise poem by al-Būṣīrī (thirteenth century), has been identified as a central text for domestic devotion (not only) in Early Modern Cairo.[14] A decisive difference between this and the later work was, however, that the latter is 'provided with detailed instructions for the reader telling him how to handle the book. Ritual purity before reading is one of them; the way of holding the book in one's hands is another'.[15] As Ibn Ṭawq's account will show, these issues were in his time to be negotiated with recourse to different works and even genres. In this, books were never completely disentangled from the direct/oral

    (*Wird*): *Prayers for the Nights and Days of the Week*, trans. P. Beneito – S. Hirtenstein (Oxford: 2008).

10   Witkam J.J., "The Battle of the Images: Mekka vs. Medina in the Iconography of the Manuscripts of al-Jazūlī's *Dalāʾil Al-Khayrāt*", in Pfeiffer J. – Kropp M. (eds.), *Theoretical Approaches to the Transmission and Edition of Oriental Manuscripts: Proceedings of a Symposium Held in Istanbul, March 28–30, 2001*, Beiruter Texte und Studien 111 (Beirut: 2007) 67–82, 295–300, here 69.

11   Al-Jazūlī Muḥammad b. Sulaymān, *al-Kitāb dalāʾil al-khayrāt wa-shawāriq al-anwār fī dhikr al-ṣalāt ʿalā al-nabī al-mukhtār*, MS Smith 135, Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York fols. 1b–2a.

12   Frederike-Wiebke Daub's published dissertation casts new light on how these texts were intended to be read; Daub F., *Formen und Funktionen des Layouts in arabischen Manuskripten anhand von Abschriften religiöser Texte: al-Būṣīrīs Burda, al-Ġazūlīs Dalāʾil und die Šifāʾ von Qāḍī ʿIyāḍ* (Wiesbaden: 2016).

13   See, for example, the percentage of prayer books contained in one thirteenth-century library: Hirschler K., *Medieval Damascus: Plurality and Diversity in an Arabic Library: The Ashrafīya Library Catalogue* (Edinburgh: 2016).

14   Abou-Khatwa N., "An Ode to Remember: The Burda of Al-Busiri in Cairene Ottoman Houses", in Kane B. (ed.), *Creswell Photographs Re-examined: New Perspectives on Islamic Architecture* (Cairo: 2009) 43–69.

15   Witkam, "The Battle of the Images" 70.

FIGURE 7.1   Anonymous, "The Prophet's grave and mosque in Medina" (18th century?). Rare
Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York, MS
Smith 217, fols. 27b–28a
IMAGE © RARE BOOK & MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

transmission of knowledge (from master to student); rather, their circulation
in part depended on – and reproduced – these very networks.

Thus, devotional book use was never an exclusively domestic phenomenon,
but needs to be seen within a nexus of practices involving different –
domestic and communal – sites of devotion, first among them educational
and devotional institutions (mosque, *madrasa*, *zāwiya*). Book circulation
connected communal and domestic spaces.

2   How to Approach Muslim Domestic Devotion?

To the best of my knowledge, spatial differentiation played in general a
minor role in Muslims' choices of devotional spaces. While the observance
of obligatory prayers at a mosque was recommended for all male adults, only

attendance at the Friday prayer should be seen as mandatory. This is reflected in Ibn Ṭawq's journal, as he frequently notes where he observed this prayer and who gave the sermon (*khuṭba*). He also tells us that on some days 'I did not go to the city today' or that his mentor Taqī al-Dīn spent whole days in his house after quarrels with his Egyptian wife.[16] They would then observe their obligatory prayers (as well as other devotions) at home.

The distinction between the profane and the sacred was not constituted by way of spatial separation but rather by the deliberate pronunciation of words. The utterance of precise devotional phrases, embedded in strict ritual acts, 'shuts off the prayer-time as sacred, and makes unlawful all ordinarily right acts, only the acts and words of the set prayer being permitted'.[17] Also, the Sufi practice of *dhikr* aimed at an individual 'state of inward recollectedness' through collective 'recitations of certain fixed phrases […] in a given order'.[18] The great mystic Ibn al-ʿArabī's prayers for the seven days of the week (*awrād al-usbūʿ*), supposedly intended for 'private and intimate' devotion, were also to be recited, if only in a mutter.[19]

Supplicatory devotions were only valid if they built upon the 'pillars of the faith'. One intriguing case is related by the biographer Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī in two separate accounts. It revolves around the interpretation of a dream by the sixteenth-century Damascene polymath Muḥammad Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 1546). The following rendition switches between both accounts:

> Ibn Ṭūlūn used to visit [shaykh Sulaymān] frequently and trusted him. One time a Sufi approached shaykh Sulaymān, asking him: 'Oh sīdī ('sir'), I have seen the Prophet in a dream and he had black skin'. Shaykh Sulaymān spoke: 'Here is our *mawlā* (teacher) shaykh Shams al-Dīn; he will interpret this dream for you'.
>
> 　　Ibn Ṭūlūn answered: 'This dream points out that the dreamer disagrees with the sunna [i.e. The Prophet's precedent], because [the Prophet] had white skin and the black colour contradicts his colour. Therefore, the dreamer contradicts the sunna'. The man sought protection from that and said: 'Not one thing of that is my belief'.
>
> 　　And the shaykh [Sulaymān?] told him: 'Certainly you violated the sunna a bit? And it is not certain that you have to repent for it'. And [the

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16　　E.g. Ibn Ṭawq, *al-Taʿlīq* vol. 1, 170.

17　　Padwick C.E., *Muslim Devotions: A Study of Prayer-Manuals in Common Use* (London: 1961) 34.

18　　Padwick, *Muslim Devotions* 14–15.

19　　Ibn al-ʿArabī, *Seven Days* 2.

Sufi] spoke: 'I myself know nothing about that except maybe I was too occupied to observe the prayer (*ṣalāt*)'.

And the shaykh [Ibn Ṭūlūn] told him: 'Oh praised be God, but which divergence from the sunna could be greater than this one? Abandoning the prayer is one of the greatest crimes! This results in the black face. As it says in the *ḥadīth*: "he who prays at night has a beautiful face during the day, but he who abandons the prayer, his face blackens"'. Now, the man wept and the shaykh made him repent.[20]

Whatever the historical accuracy of the account, it is certainly a powerful moral tale. The inquiring Sufi, who ranked mystic forms of devotion above the obligatory prayers, was harshly reprimanded not only by the shaykhs but also, in a way, by the Prophet himself. In contrast, a certain shaykh Maʿrūf had dedicated his whole life to devotion, the feeding of the poor and garden work (*ʿamal al-basātīn*), and would even climb the city gates to make sure he did not miss the obligatory prayers at the central Umayyad Mosque. His piety was rewarded when one night he was visited by the Prophet himself. Moreover, the Prophet licked from a bowl of honey in Maʿrūf's house. Miraculously, the honey remained, and henceforth Maʿrūf offered it to all 'Qurʾān reciters and jurists' who would call on him.[21] The relevant hierarchy was thus not between communal and domestic sites of devotion but between obligatory and supplicatory devotions, and domestic practices would often have corresponded to communal rituals at other sites.

On the other hand, educational and devotional institutions (*madrasa*, Sufi convent, mosque) included somewhat 'domestic' spaces as well. Descendants of the founder and other beneficiaries might have their residence there, and in his influential manual on the conduct of scholars and students, Badr al-Dīn Ibn Jamāʿa (1241–1333) ascribes certain 'domestic' qualities to the cells (*khalwa*) where teachers and students lived.[22] They were also important sites of book circulation and book use, which are difficult to disentangle from domestic settings. Sessions of Prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*) were frequently held in private

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20   This version has been collated from both accounts in favour of a more lively description: al-Ghazzī, Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad: *al-Kawākib al-sāʾira bi-aʿyān al-miʾa al-ʿāshira*, ed. J. Jabbūr, 2 vols. (Beirut: 1945) vol. 2, 53, 148.

21   Al-Buṣrawī ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn, *Tārīkh al-Buṣrawī ṣafaḥāt majhūla min tārīkh Dimashq fī ʿaṣr Al-mamālīk (min Sanat 871 H li-ġāyat 904 H)*, ed. A. al-ʿUlabī (Damascus: 1988) 42.

22   E.g. Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 3, 1534; Ibn Jamāʿa, Badr al-Dīn Muḥammad, *Kitāb kifāyat al-mutakallim fī adab al-ʿālim wa-l-mutaʿallim*, X-Series, MS X893.7 Ib65 (1), Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York fol. 48b.

homes, in particular when they were taught by female transmitters.[23] Ibn Ṭawq was present when one Ibn al-ʿUllāf was examined on works of grammar and Qurʾānic recitation in his mother's house (qāʿa) and received general approval and 100 dirham for his presentation.[24] Teaching and examination of students, in particular, seems to have followed set procedures, which allows us to close gaps that otherwise would remain obscure. Ibn al-ʿUllāf's examination might thus have resembled another in the Shāmiyya al-Barrāniyya madrasa. There, the above-mentioned Taqī al-Dīn posed forty questions on ḥadīth to his student ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ṣaffūrī (apparently in writing), on which he would be examined the next day. The student would recite the questions and his answers from his notes (kurrās/kurrāsa) and comment upon them. Afterwards, the scholars present would examine his reading and answers.[25]

Educational and devotional book use cannot be completely separated from each other since the search for knowledge (ṭalab al-ʿilm) was every believer's obligation (although books were not always perceived as the means to achieve it).[26] They also shared a sacralization of book use, both in reading and writing:

> [I]t is necessary that you are in a ritually clean state. Thus turn your face to the qibla, body and clothes clean, and write every book beginning with "bi-smi-llāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm" ['in the name of God the all-merciful']. The book begins with a sermon to thank God and the prayer for the Prophet – write this after the basmalla. Only then write what the book is about. The same is done at the end of the book and at the end of each juzʾ [quire/section/volume], until the book is finished […].[27]

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23   Sayeed A., "Women and Ḥadīth Transmission. Two Case Studies From Mamluk Damascus", *Studia Islamica* 95 (2002) 71–94.

24   Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 1, 533. In one biographical work, Ibn Ṭūlūn mentions tens or even hundreds of other occasions of devotion and learning taking place in private houses; "Dhakhāʾir al-qaṣr fī tarājim nubalāʾ al-ʿaṣr", Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek Gotha, MS Orient A 1779.

25   Ibn Ṭūlūn Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, *Mufākahat al-khillān fī ḥawādith al-zamān: Tārīkh Miṣr wa-l-Shām*, ed. M. Muṣṭafā (Cairo: 1964) vol. 1, 88.

26   Liebrenz B., *Die Rifāʿiya aus Damaskus: Eine Privatbibliothek im Osmanischen Syrien und ihr kulturelles Umfeld* (Leiden: 2016) 4–11.

27   Ibn Jamāʿa, *Kitāb Kifāya*, fols. 39b-40a. Cf. Sadan J., "New Materials Regarding Purity and Impurity of Books in Islam in Comparison with Judaism. Al-Burzulī and Other Muslim Scholars on Defiled Parchment, Papyrus and Paper", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 33 (2007) 193–218.

Texts were first to be studied under a master to ensure that they were understood in the right way, and even so, unsupervised book use could be a 'source of anxiety and censure'.[28] Ibn Ṭawq's account does not address this issue but it betrays a comparable veneration for the objects. Books that were left with him to be delivered to their owner he therefore kept in his cell (*khalwa*), where they were safer than in the buzz of his household.[29] Others he purposefully brought to his home, for they were valued for qualities beyond their content. His exclamation that 'may God be merciful to the authors and the donors' indicates that the collection and endowment of books was valued almost as much as the writing of new ones.[30]

3 Book Circulation in Damascus

Book circulation rested on three pillars: the local book market east of the Umayyad Mosque – virtually absent from Ibn Ṭawq's journal, educational and devotional institutions, and private collections. As mentioned above, religious institutions were the heavyweights in the local production, transmission, and distribution of (devotional) books. In the Dār al-Ḥadīth al-Ashrafiyya, a thirteenth-century foundation dedicated to the teaching of Prophetic traditions, a librarian was tasked with the restoration of bindings and individual folios, and decisions about the acquisition and reproduction of texts lay with the highest offices: the shaykh and the supervisor. At specific times, copying by students was supported by provision of writing tools, paper, and even stipends and food.[31] Even many smaller institutions had a librarian who took account of in – and outgoing books.[32]

These institutions were also preferred repositories of books. One generation after Ibn Ṭawq, the polymath Ibn Ṭūlūn remarks that the important Abū ʿUmar madrasa housed some of the most important endowed collections:

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28 El-Rouayheb K., "The Rise of 'Deep Reading' in Early Modern Ottoman Scholarly Culture", in Pollock S. – Elman B.A. – Chang K.K. (eds.), *World Philology* (Cambridge – London: 2015) 201–214, here 201.

29 Explicitly: Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 1, 337; Implicitly: Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 4, 1556.

30 Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 3, 1098.

31 Ibn Ṭūlūn Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, *al-Lamaʿāt al-barqiyya fī al-nukat al-tārīkhiyya*, ed. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al- Munajjid (Damascus: 1929) 23–24.

32 Hirschler K., *The Written Word in the Medieval Arabic Lands: A Social and Cultural History of Reading Practices* (Edinburgh: 2012) 138.

In this madrasa, a number of people have endowed their book cases (libraries), the most exalted of which are the books of the sayyid [Kamāl al-Dīn or ʿIzz al-Dīn] al-Ḥusaynī. Others are the books of shaykh Qiwām al-Dīn al-Ḥanafī, Shams al-Dīn al-Bānyasī, the traditiony Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī, Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Manṣūr and the Dīwān al-Jaysh Badr al-Dīn. Among these books is the Qurʾān copy (*muṣḥaf*) in the handwriting of the Imām ʿAlī Ibn Abī Ṭālib [the Prophet's son-in-law].[33]

As this quote indicates, the importance of an endowed library to a large extent depended on private efforts of book collection. The individuals mentioned had first accumulated considerable collections before they endowed a library. Private initiative was also essential in transporting books between places. The introduction of a work from a distant place – or the distant past – was often celebrated by biographers as much as the publication of an original work. The above-mentioned Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī was thus credited for bringing a commentary by one of his Egyptian teachers to the attention of scholars in Damascus.[34] A certain Maḥmūd al-Shīrāzī introduced to Syria excerpts from commentaries of twelve East Anatolian scholars he had jotted down in his copy of Ḥusayn al-Baghawī's (d. 1117 or 1122) *ḥadīth* collection *Maṣābīḥ al-sunan*: 'All these works were in that period available in the lands of the Kurds but rarely in the Lands of the Arabs'.[35] One Aḥmad al-Kūrānī (b. 809/1406–7) endowed his own publications in Damascene institutions, even after he had migrated to Anatolia.[36] Ibn Ṭūlūn's own fame as a, if not *the* historian of his era, rested to a high degree on his rediscoveries and summaries of obscure works by almost forgotten scholars.[37] His works furthermore include hints that his research was not restricted to endowed libraries but took him into people's private collections as well.

Judging by Ibn Ṭawq's account, the local circulation of devotional texts rested to a considerable degree on privately owned copies, but they were not necessarily the individual user's property. Rather, they would often be away

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33 Ibn Ṭūlūn Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, *al-Qalāʾid al-jawhariyya fī tārīkh al-Ṣāliḥiyya*, ed. M. Duhmān et al., 2 vols. (Damascus: 1949–56) vol. 1, 273–274.

34 For his biography, see Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib* vol. 1, 40–46.

35 Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib* vol. 2, 249.

36 For his biography, see Ibn Ṭūlūn Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, al-Ghuraf al-ʿĀliyya fī Tarājim Mutaʾakhkhirī al-Ḥanafiyya, Istanbul, Süleymaniyye Library, MS Şehid Ali Paşa 192 fols. 47b–48b.

37 Perhaps the best example is his work on governors of Damascus since the Mongol invasion (1260), more than half of which is an abridged copy of an earlier account: Ibn Ṭūlūn Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad, *Iʿlām al-warā bi-man waliya nāʾiban min al-Atrāk bi-Dimashq al-shām al-kubrā*, ed. M. Duhmān (Damascus: 1984).

from their owner as long-time borrowings between the homes of friends and family members.

4 Ibn Ṭawq on Book Circulation

Ibn Ṭawq's journal is an exceptional text in that it is not exclusively concerned with the extraordinary or unexpected, but addresses some of the very secular practices that constituted the everyday. Book use and exchange were clearly part of this lived reality. Yet, his treatment of these affairs is often rather nonchalant and explanations are few. Ibn Ṭawq does not speak about reading experiences or devotional engagement but only mentions books when they are purchased, borrowed, copied, or delivered. Furthermore, the sample is uneven: sold books are only named when the author was present for the sale, nor does he always explain why he delivered a book – had he borrowed it for himself or did he return it for another peruser? Moreover, Ibn Ṭawq uses abbreviates titles for many works, often without giving an author, which repeatedly creates ambiguities about the works' identities and subjects. To give but one example, the title '*al-Tahdhīb*' (mentioned below) could refer to a collection of biographies by the thirteenth-century historian al-Dhahabī (*Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*) but also to a biography of the Prophet by the fourteenth-century scholar Ibn Kathīr (*Tahdhīb sīrat Ibn Kathīr*) or to a *ḥadīth* compilation by the fifteenth-century jurist Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (also *Tahdhīb al-tahdhīb*). My conclusions therefore have to depend on circumstantial information and might be faulty. In the following tables, a question mark indicates where I am uncertain about the identity of a work or author.

Within the twenty-year period covered by the journal, I have identified eighteen cases of book circulation, which include about thirty intellectual works and more than forty individual items. Among them are one entry on book confiscation, four on purchases (three of which are connected to inheritance); but ten on borrowing, only two of which were explicitly connected with making new copies (although more indicate the same aim). One entry refers to the compilation of a new work.[38] The pervasive presence of devotional texts attests to the scholarly and Sufi-inclined circles in which Ibn Ṭawq moved: in addition to the Qurʾān, the largest share of the sample is made up by a large number of books about the Prophet – his biography, discussions about his qualities, and praise poems for him, collections of prayers, legal texts that dealt with ritual and ablution, and biographies of pious and erudite people from earlier

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38 Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 2, 842.

generations.[39] In contrast, Ibn Ṭawq dismisses books sold from the inheritance of a deceased emir as of little worth: 'Most of them are boastful epics (*fashārāt*). Among them was [even] the [historical epos] *Sīrat ʿAntara*'.[40]

While this sample might still seem meagre, it should be understood as the tip of the iceberg and allows for conclusions about the wider circulation of books. First, many of the books Ibn Ṭawq identifies circulated within a very exclusive circle of fewer than ten people who were connected to each other by kinship ties and/or teacher-student relations. Whereas the aural/oral transmission of knowledge established – sometimes lifelong – relationships, book loans apparently presupposed those. Such an exchange depended on close social contacts, both because of a book's material value and because of the need to assess a user's ability to comprehend a book. The central figure for the author's network was the above-mentioned Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī ʿAjlūn who exchanged nine items in four entries, but through whom Ibn Ṭawq was connected to other important book owners: Taqī al-Dīn's students Shams al-Dīn al-Kafarsūsī (1 entry/4 items) and Sirāj al-Dīn al-Ṣayrafī (1 entry/ 2 items), and his nephew Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī, who purchased another ten books for the large sum of 4680 silver dirham (*fiḍḍa*) [See table 1].[41] Kamāl al-Dīn's brother-in-law Abū al-Faḍl Ibn Imām had Ibn Ṭawq copy parts of the Prophet's biography.[42] Finally, after Kamāl al-Dīn had suffered some hardships by the hands of the governor, Ibn Ṭawq brought to his house his own copies of the Mantle Ode and the *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, two texts that should comfort him and give him strength to face these adversities.[43]

Secondly, loans were an important means of gaining access to (certain) books, sometimes for months at a time, and so allowing for intense engagement with them. Overall, only in six entries can items be identified as the property of endowed libraries, and in nine as private property, six of them purchases, confiscations, and compilations of previous books to make a new one. In the remaining cases, all concerning book loans, ownership remains uncertain. In this context, possession of a book was more important for Ibn Ṭawq than ownership. Access to these books seems to have been curtailed along educational hierarchies, so that one might need an interlocutor (e.g. one's shaykh)

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39   Biographical literature 'defends, and of course defines, the tradition' that establishes correct devotions; Calder N., "Law", in Nasr S.H. – Leaman O. (eds.), *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London: 1996) 979–998, here 982.

40   Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 1, 268. The other one is found at p. 289.

41   Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 1, 263–264.

42   Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 1, 350.

43   Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 2, 905.

TABLE 7.1   Books sold, based on Ibn Ṭawq, al-Taʿlīq vol. 1, 263–264; vol. 4, 1659

Title (author/copyist)	Subject	Seller	Buyer	Price (in dirham)
Tahdhīb [sīrat Ibn Kathīr?] (Ibn Kathīr?/Ibn Raslān)	biographies of traditionaries	Ibrāhīm al-Qudsī	Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī	600
Mukhtaṣar sharḥ lāmiyyat al-ʿajam (al-Ṣafadī?)	Poetry, commentary, summary	Ibrāhīm al-Qudsī	Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī	100
5x Sharḥ al-Bukhārī (Ibn Ḥijjī/Shams al-Dīn al-Qudsī)	Ḥadīth, commentary	Ibrāhīm al-Qudsī	Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī	[sold in bulk for 3588]
Sharḥ al-Bukhārī (al-Barmāwī/Shams al-Dīn al-Qudsī)	Ḥadīth, commentary	Ibrāhīm al-Qudsī	Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī	[sold in bulk for 3588]
Sharḥ al-Bahja [of Ibn al-Wardī] (al-Anṣārī?/Shams al-Dīn al-Qudsī)	Law, commentary	Ibrāhīm al-Qudsī	Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī	450
[Kitāb al-] Adhkār (al-Nawawī/Ibn Raslān)	Dhikr, prayers	Ibrāhīm al-Qudsī	Kamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥusaynī	150
Qurʾān	Qurʾān	[a young man from al-Bajadaliyya]	Muḥsin al-Turkmānī al-Qābūnī	121
Qurʾān	Qurʾān	-	Muḥsin al-Turkmānī al-Qābūnī	140

to obtain a book. Endowed libraries seem to have granted loans of their books only to a restricted circle:

> I delivered to Zayn al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Baʿalī the last [part] of *Maqbūl al-manqūl* which he had borrowed for me [last year] from the shaykh of the *zāwiya*, al-Bānyāsī's son, and along with those two other volumes. I had quickly sent them back to Zayn al-Dīn, but this one stayed with me. I returned it to him today; this shall be known![44]

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44   Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 4, 1556.

Likewise, Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī ʿAjlūn, who held an important teaching post in the Umayyad Mosque, was in the position to permit the loan of a two-hundred-year-old Qurʾān.[45] In another case, he loaned a book from a Sufi convent that Ibn Ṭawq delivered to the stepson of shaykh Ibn Dāwūd (whose daughter had married his cousin) when they met in Kamāl al-Dīn's house.[46] Thus, the exchange of books relied on and, at the same time, reinforced networks of kinship and hierarchies of knowledge. Although it is not explicitly stated, this practice served to control who was allowed to read what and who was not deemed ready. Domestic use of books thus depended on earlier mastering of these texts in a more controlled educational setting.[47]

TABLE 7.2   Borrowed works (Titles as found in the text plus additions to identify them)

Title (author)	Subject	Items	Vol./Page
Qurʾān	Qurʾān	bound vol.	II/906
Sīrat Ibn Sayyid al-Nās (Muḥammad al-Yaʾmūrī)	The Prophet's biography	parts (1st)	III/1098
al-Sīra al-nabawiyya (Ibn Hishām or Ibn Kathīr)	The Prophet's biography	parts (4th, 5th, 8th)	I/171, 223
Kitāb al-anwār [fī shamāʾil al-Nabī al-Mukhtār?] (al-Baghawī?)	The Prophet's biography	part	III/1090
Dafʿ al-Shubbah (al-Ḥuṣnī)	Qualities of the Prophet	part	I/223
Kitāb al-Shifāʾ (al-Nawājī)	Qualities of the Prophet	complete?	II/905
Qaṣīdat al-burda al-sharīfa (al-Būṣīrī)	Praise poem for the Prophet	complete	II/905
-	Prayers for the Prophet	part	I/223
-	[sayings by the Prophet's companion Tamīm al-Dārī]	part	IV/1556
Notes on Hadiyat al-aḥyāʾ li-l-amwāt (al-Hakkārī, d. 1163)	Prayers for the dead	small notebook/ part	IV/1556
Faḍāʾil sayyidnā Khalīl al-raḥmān (Ibn ʿAsākir)	Merits of Abraham/Hebron	part	IV/1556
Faḍāʾil al-Quds al-sharīf (Ibn al-Jawzī)	Merits of Jerusalem	part	IV/1556

45   Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 2, 905–906.
46   Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 1, 337.
47   Cf. El-Rouayheb, *Deep Reading* 217.

TABLE 7.2   Borrowed works (Titles as found in the text plus additions to identify them) (cont.)

Title (author)	Subject	Items	Vol./Page
Fatḥ al-Bārī (Ibn Ḥajar)	Ḥadīth, commentary	parts (1st, 2nd)	I/427
Sharḥ mukhtaṣar ṣaḥīḥ muslim (al-Ḥuṣnī)	Ḥadīth, commentary	part (1st)	II/1030–31
-	refutation of Abū Ḥanīfa	part	I/223
Maqbūl al-manqūl (al-Sībānī?)	Law	part (last)	IV/1556
[Bidāyat al-muḥtāj fī] Sharḥ al-Minhāj (Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba)	Law, commentary	part (1st)	III/1090, 1098
ʿUjālat [al-muḥtāj ilā tawjīh] al-minhāj (Ibn al-Mulaqqin)	Law, glosses	part (1st)	III/1098
Ṭabaqāt [al-shāfiʿiyyāt] al-Kubrā (al-Subkī)	Biographies	10 quires (karārīs) of part 2	I/350
-	Genealogy (ansāb)	part	I/223
al-Qāmūs (al-Fīrūzābādī)	Lexicography	part	I/337

The relevance of personal ties is also visible in Ibn Ṭawq's descriptions of books. For most of the items purchased by Kamāl al-Dīn the copyists Shams al-Dīn al-Qudsī and Ibn Raslān[48] are identified. In another book loan, he mentions a volume 'in the handwriting of the late Sarī al-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, his father's *Sharḥ al-Minhāj*' and the '*Kitāb al-anwār* in the handwriting of the author's son'. Direct transmission within a family appears to have contributed to a work's devotional value. Yet, these connections mattered beyond faithfulness to an original text:

> I delivered the first *juzʾ* (part, volume, quire) of the *Sharḥ mukhtaṣar ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (commentary on an abridgement of a *ḥadīth* collection) by the Sufi shaykh Taqī al-Dīn al-Ḥuṣnī [d. 829] – may God return some of his *baraka* to me, my children and whom else I love – in the handwriting of shaykh Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ḥuṣnī's son, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad to the

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48   Perhaps identical with Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Arslān (d. 1440), an important Sufi *shaykh* in Mamluk Syria; Ephrat D., "The Shaykh, the Physical Setting and the Holy Site: The Diffusion of the Qādirī Path in Late Medieval Palestine", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 19, 11 (2009) 1–20.

zāwiya at the Khān al-Ḥuṣnī close to the Muṣallā [square]. It was with me for almost ten months.[49]

Not only was this book written by one and copied by another member of the Ḥuṣnī family, it also rested in the Sufi convent founded by one of its members. Ibn Ṭawq valued the book highly not only for its content but also as a host of *baraka*, a term which comprises both a person's continued spiritual presence and the blessings that presence could bestow upon other people. The devotional value of a book was thus not only enshrined in the text but in the object itself. The transmission of *baraka* depended on direct interaction between people – and apparently between people and books. Much as with shaykh Maʿrūf's honeypot, a book could store *baraka* of its creator (either author or scribe). A much earlier example of this belief is that of Abū ʿUmar (d. 1210), eponym of the above-mentioned madrasa. He would perform prayers on his doorstep to safeguard his neighbours' houses, and the Qurʾān copies he produced 'were known to convey *baraka* [blessings] into the homes of those who held them'.[50] Ibn Ṭawq's admission that he had kept this commentary for several months indicates that a similar value was still ascribed to books as carriers of *baraka* by his time.

Thus, even fragmentary books could become precious items, and loans seem to have concerned mostly partial works. Ibn Ṭawq usually uses the term *juzʾ*, which could mean anything from a quire to a full section (chapter: *bāb, faṣl*) of a text to a complete manuscript or a volume of a larger work [see table 2]. In contrast to the items sold, these appear not to have been bound (*mujallad* or *bi-jild/julūd*) but circulated in smaller units of either quire or section, in response to a widespread demand for these materials, which, as we have seen, was not exhausted with reading. Circulation by *juzʾ* allowed one book to be spread out among a larger number of (domestic) users and even enabled the joint investigation of one subject in several works:

I lent from the Turābiyya *zāwiya*: the beginning of the *Sīrat Ibn Sayyid al-Nās* […], the beginning of the *ʿUjālat al-minhāj* until the commandments (*waṣāyā*), the beginning of the *Sharḥ al-minhāj* by Taqī al-Dīn Ibn Qāḍī Shuhba, may God be merciful to the authors and the donors![51]

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49   Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 2, 1030–1031.
50   Talmon-Heller, *Islamic Piety* 97.
51   Ibn Ṭawq, *Al-Taʿlīq* vol. 3, 1098.

With one biography of the Prophet, Ibn Ṭawq borrowed, allegedly for his own use, two legal works, or at least those parts which dealt with issues of 'purity, prayer, fasting, alms, pilgrimage (the essential acts of worship, '*ibādāt*, and invariably the first five books of [any jurisprudential work])'.[52] It is impossible to say whether he used these works only for himself or also to instruct other members of his household. However, it becomes clear that devotional engagement did not require a whole work, nor for a work to be read in a specific order. Here, the works were approached and collated thematically. It is difficult to assess whether this should be ascribed only to the advanced levels of these specific users or whether it is indicative of wider cultural practices. The practice of borrowing ensured wider access to written materials, albeit under controlled conditions. Within this context, books moved slowly but surely from hand to hand (and from house to house).

5   Conclusions

Ibn Ṭawq's reports on book circulation thus allow a glimpse into practices that connected domestic and other forms and sites of devotion. Books provided believers with access to prayers, praise poems, and debates upon the validity of devotions and ablutions, and at the same time could themselves become venerable objects which connected their users and owners to admirable figures from past generations and offered their blessings upon the new possessor and his household. As has been argued elsewhere, books also became more important as a source of authority on questions related to devotion during this time.

Ibn Ṭawq's reports on book use attest to the importance of Prophetic devotion in his time, a phenomenon that encompasses the above-mentioned dreams and *mawlid* festivities as well. Books might have been used for recitations of those supplicatory prayers, resulting in an apparition of the Prophet, as well as for the recitation of a *mawlid* on a festive occasion. And much like an invitation to a *mawlid* or a wedding in another person's home, the loan of a book relied upon close ties between the people involved. Loaning books allowed for a control similar to that of choosing one's guest list and adhered to established social hierarchies. A book had first to be studied with a master before being used alone correctly: 'if the text remained in the mind, it was a constantly available solace and pleasure'.[53] Only then, domestic devotional book use would, for Ibn Ṭawq, become an accepted practice.

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52   Calder, "Law" 981.
53   Calder, "Law" 989.

In contrast, al-Jazūlī's *Dalā'il al-khayrāt* enabled a different dimension of devotional book use, in which the book could stand on its own and even include advice about its perusal. This may have 'authorized' domestic book use to a new degree. At the same time, this work often became the core of new collections of texts.[54] Yet, it should be seen as the most successful proponent of a wider phenomenon. Likewise, those quires that circulated in Ibn Ṭawq's circles would eventually be codified as a compiled volume (*majmūʿa*). These books could take the form of a prayer book, a notebook or a commonplace book, and often also served as a family archive.[55] One example is a manuscript codex which contains, among other fragments, a partial biographical work by Kamāl al-Dīn's father, a list of his own children and their birth dates, and a teaching certificate for his great-great-grandson.[56] As several ownership annotations of other descendants of Kamāl al-Dīn indicate, this book – it was hoped – would perpetuate the memory of the family even after their library might be sold (as a whole), dissolved or endowed. In the face of the borrowing practices described by Ibn Ṭawq, a book was not necessarily out of reach after it was endowed. It did not necessarily mean that one could not read or even keep them in one's home. Whereas it is difficult to establish which books were written in domestic settings, it is clear that they were used there. In fact, the *memoria* functions of books can only be understood against the background of their circulation between private and endowed libraries and a wider readership. A book was a tangible object that connected one's present to the great figures of the past or to one's forefathers – and promised to offer the same for oneself in the future. This was not to be achieved by storing it away. Its value was realized only by its future readers and copyists. Another pious or scholarly owner's or user's inscription on its pages would prove the worth of its contents as well as add to the *baraka* – and thus the value – of the book.

Not only with regard to their importance for domestic devotion, books should therefore be studied as material objects embedded in diverse practices, not purely as texts. The thousands of collective manuscripts which survive in the Arabic language alone bespeak the widespread investment of time, money, and knowledge that went into the selection and compilation of collective manuscripts in Islamicate societies – and while the preservation of

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54 See, for example, Tokyo, Daiber Collection, MS 334: several prayers and a list of al-Jazūlī's teachers are added to the *Dalā'il*.

55 These books often seem to have had similar purposes as early modern English household books; cf. Marotti A.F. – May S.W., *Ink, Stink Bait, Revenge, and Queen Elizabeth: A Yorkshire Yeoman's Household Book* (Ithaca – London: 2014) in particular 7–12.

56 Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig, MS Vollers 678 <http://www.refaiya.uni-leipzig.de/receive/RefaiyaBook_islamhs_00003007> (last accessed 16 Oct. 2015).

knowledge was one important goal, the compilation of older 'original' texts also attests to a person's creativity and originality in his own engagement with God and the world. Through systematic explorations of these textual corpora, investigations into the exciting domain of domestic devotions could thus bear additional benefits for the field at large, making these sources accessible to a wider scholarship.

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Commemoration of the Prophet's Birthday as a Domestic Ritual in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century Damascus

Marion H. Katz

1 Celebrations of the Birthday of the Prophet Muḥammad

A fifteenth-century Syrian devotional work in commemoration of the birthday of the Prophet Muḥammad recounts the following tale:

> There was a man in Egypt who used to hold a celebration of the birthday of the Prophet [Muḥammad] (peace be upon him!). Next to him lived a Jewish man; his wife said to him, 'Why is it that this Muslim neighbour of ours expends a lot of money [every year] in this month and gathers groups of people to observe it?' He said, 'He claims that their prophet was born in this month, so he does that to rejoice in him and to celebrate that honour.' At that she was silent and pondered for a long while. The two of them slept that night and the woman dreamt of a beautiful man displaying dignity, pride, serenity and gravity who had entered the door of their Muslim neighbour[1]; around him was a group [of men] who came gesturing[2] to him with reverence and veneration. She said to one of those men, 'Who is that man whose face is like the greatest moon?' He replied, 'He is the Messenger of God (peace be upon him!); he entered this home to greet its inhabitants and visit them because they have rejoiced in his birthday and abounded in delight.'

At this the Jewish woman greets the Prophet and converts to Islam at his hand; she and her husband (who has had the same dream) proceed to spend their wealth on their own celebration of the Prophet's birthday.[3]

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1 Literally: 'their neighbour who had been honoured with Islam'.
2 Reading '*yushīrūn*' for '*yasīrūn*'.
3 Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn Makkīya, *Durar al-biḥār fī mawlid al-Mukhtār*, ms. Cairo, Dār al-Kutub, Ta'rīkh no. 3807, fol. 14v–15r (28–29 in pagination written on manuscript).

In this narrative, which was widely cited in devotional texts commemorating the birth of the Prophet Muḥammad,[4] the celebration of his birth is an act of personal commitment that attracts the Prophet himself to visit the home of the devotee. In this way, it is integrally related to the Muslim identity of the household. It is also the occasion of hospitality to guests of a more mundane variety. It thus simultaneously sanctifies domestic space, enhances the religious profile of the family dwelling there, and helps to build the social networks in which that family is enmeshed.

Although this story is at least notionally set in Egypt (and presumably in the past), it also reflects the complex of beliefs and practices around the commemoration of the Prophet's birth – the *mawlid al-nabawī al-sharīf*, or more briefly the *mawlid* – in Syria at the time of the manuscript's production. The Prophet Muḥammad neither celebrated his own birthday nor instructed others to do so; nevertheless, Sunni Muslims in Syria were commemorating his birth by the twelfth century of the Common Era, and the fourteenth century saw an upsurge in the production of devotional texts on this theme among religious scholars in Damascus.[5] By the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, ceremonies commemorating the Prophet's birthday were a widespread feature of the religious lives of ordinary residents of Damascus.

Studies of the Prophet's birthday have focused extensively on the spectacular celebrations of this occasion held under the auspices of rulers;[6] however, from an early stage in its development the *mawlid* was also a domestic celebration hosted by ordinary people from various walks of life. *Mawlid* ceremonies usually involved the recitation of the narrative of the Prophet's birth, often in a distinctive literary form alternating passages of rhymed-prose narrative with interludes of poetry in praise of the Prophet. Such a ceremony might be led by a professional reciter offering vocal artistry and/or religious expertise; guests would participate by joining in the invocation of God's blessings upon the Prophet, an activity understood to yield bountiful quantities of religious merit. The ceremony culminated with the narration of the Prophet's actual birth, when guests would stand (the *qiyām*) in honour of his symbolic arrival in the gathering. This practice was criticized by some authorities as a religious innovation. However, by the fifteenth-sixteenth century it was so widespread

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4 See Katz M.H., *The Birth of the Prophet Muḥammad: Devotional Piety in Sunni Islam* (Abingdon: 2007) 74.

5 Katz, *Birth of the Prophet* 54–56.

6 See for instance, Kaptein N.J.C., *Muḥammad's Birthday Festival* (Leiden: 1993) 76–166; Brown J.A.O.C., "Azafid Ceuta, Mawlid al-Nabī and the Development of Marīnid Strategies of Legitimation", in Bennison A.K. (ed.), *The Articulation of Power in Medieval Iberia and the Maghrib* (Oxford: 2014) 127–151.

in practice that those who rejected it risked being perceived as deviant or irreverent themselves.[7] It could be taken to imply belief in the symbolic or spiritual presence of the Prophet at the ceremony (and thus within one's home, if that was the venue of the ritual), although this assumption is rarely made explicit.[8] Guests would offer gifts or monetary contributions, and would often be served a festive meal. *Mawlid* ceremonies sponsored by private individuals could be held in more 'public' venues such as mosques, but as we shall see, many were held in family homes.

2   Domestic *Mawlids* and the Celebration of Lifecycle Events

A unique glimpse of these ceremonies is provided by the diary of Aḥmad ibn Ṭawq, a modestly learned Damascene notary who recorded his daily activities for two decades starting in 1480.[9] His entry for the sixteenth of Rabīʿ al-Awwal 887 AH (1482 CE) recounts that:

> On [this date] I happened to go to the house of Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Waṭfa the confectioner with the Shaykh Burhān al-Dīn al-Nājī. The Shaykh Shams al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī, Nūr al-Dīn the pious man from al-Shāghūr [a neighbourhood in Damascus], and a group of confectioners and others were present, about twenty people in all. First, before the recitation [of the *mawlid*] they served collections of sugar sweets and pastries; after the *mawlid* they set out a meal [including] a bean dish, couscous with chicken and meat, sweet rice with sugar and almond oil, and an apricot dish. After that they served large amounts of sugar [syrup] and [passed around] musk and rosewater.[10]

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7   See Katz, *Birth of the Prophet* 128–39.

8   *Mawlid* texts not infrequently feature poems or songs 'welcoming' the Prophet at the moment of his birth, suggesting that the theme of arrival or presence was at least metaphorically in play. For an example from the contemporary Damascene work of ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūnīya see her *Mawlid al-nabī* in Fāris Aḥmad al-ʿAlāwī, *ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūnīya al-Dimashqīya: ashhar aʿlām dimashq awākhir ʿahd al-mamālīk* (Damascus: 1994) 152.

9   On Ibn Ṭawq, see Conermann S. – Seidensticker T., "Some Remarks on Ibn Ṭawq's (d. 915/1509) Journal *Al-Taʿlīq*, vol. 1 (885/1480 to 890/1485)", *Mamluk Studies Review* 11, 2 (2007) 121–135; Guo L., "*Al-Taʿlīq: Yawmīyāt Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq*, ed. Sheikh Jaafar alMuhajer (Jaʿfar al-Muhājir)", *Mamluk Studies Review* 12, 1 (2008) 210–218; Wollina T., *Zwanzig Jahre Alltag: Lebens-, Welt- und Selbstbild im Journal des Aḥmad ibn Ṭawq* (Göttingen – Bonn: 2014).

10   Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Ṭawq, *al-Taʿlīq: Yawmīyāt Shihāb al-Dīn Ibn Ṭawq*, ed. Jaʿfar al-Muhājir (Damascus: 2000) vol. 1, 156–157.

Here a man of the merchant or artisan class (a maker or vendor of sweets) celebrates the Prophet's birthday with a festive gathering. Ibn Ṭawq finds it worthy of note that the event brings several men of scholarly or pious repute into Ibn Waṭfa's home. The gathering involves generous hospitality whose predominantly sugary character reflects both the host's profession and the local convention of celebrating auspicious occasions with sweet food and drinks.[11] The repast closes with the use of musk and rosewater; tradition holds that the Prophet Muḥammad's person was redolent of these sweet scents,[12] which must have pervaded the room in Ibn Waṭfa's house where the *mawlid* was held. This event both used the host's connections and resources to bring an auspicious and prestigious aura of religious piety into the space of his home, and utilized the hospitable comforts of his home to reinforce his network in the world beyond its walls.

Domestic *mawlid*s seem to have been fairly common events in Damascus in this period. Over the twenty-year period covered by the surviving pages of his diary Ibn Ṭawq records forty-one *mawlid* ceremonies; one may assume that this is not an exhaustive inventory, but probably reflects his fluctuating interest in attending or recording the celebrations. In terms of location, nine of the forty-one *mawlid*s are explicitly stated to have taken place in homes and ten in other locales; thus, more than half of the locations remain indeterminate.[13] Of the ten performed in venues other than homes three took place in mosques, five in sufi lodges (*zāwiya*), one at a shrine, and one at the ruler's stable, which was at this time the site of some important governmental functions. Examination of the information Ibn Ṭawq supplies about the *mawlid*s he attended suggests that those held in private homes were distinct in motivation and format from those held in other venues. This is not to say that there were two distinct and clearly demarcated varieties of *mawlid*s, but that, based on these data, domestic *mawlid*s tended to have certain distinctive features as compared with those held in more public places. Specifically, there are clear correlations between the holding of *mawlid*s in family homes, the celebration of life-cycle rituals,

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11   Wollina, *Zwanzig Jahre* 167.
12   See, for instance, Schimmel A., *And Muhammad Is His Messenger: The Veneration of the Prophet in Islamic Piety* (Chapel Hill: 1985) 34–35.
13   For *mawlid*s stated to have been held in homes, see Ibn Ṭawq, *Taʿlīq* vol. 1, 60, 156–157; vol. 2, 1052; vol. 3, 1106–1107, 1178, 1255, 1268, 1277, 1456. For *mawlid*s stated to have been held in other locations, see ibid. vol. 1, 345 (mosque); vol. 1, 346 (*zāwiya*); vol. 2, 619 (mosque); vol. 3, 1167 (*zāwiya*); vol. 3, 1240 (*zāwiya*); vol. 1334 (Sayyidī Saʿd, probably a saint's shrine); vol. 3, 1344 (*zāwiya*); vol. 4, 1659 (*zāwiya*); vol. 4, 1838 ([royal] stable); vol. 4, 1851–2 (madrasa). The case on vol. 4, 1844 is ambiguous – it is not clear whether the *mawlid* was actually at the *zāwiya*, and if so, whether the *zāwiya* was in fact the residence of the host.

and the serving of food – elements that are minimally represented in *mawlid*s celebrated outside of the home.

The *mawlid* is best known as a calendrical celebration focusing on the Prophet's birthday (usually understood by Sunnis to have occurred on the 12th of Rabīʿ al-Awwal, the third month of the Islamic lunar calendar), but extending to the entire month of his birth. By the period under consideration here, however, *mawlid* ceremonies were no longer exclusively associated with the day or month of the Prophet's nativity. Of the *mawlid*s referenced by Ibn Ṭawq, eighteen occur in the month of the Prophet's birthday and the other twenty-three at other times of the year.[14] Of the eighteen *mawlid*s held in the month of the Prophet's birth, only three are associated with specific auspicious events: two with dreams of the Prophet (one experienced by the ceremony's host,[15] the other by the host's wife)[16] and one with a circumcision.[17] Of the 23 *mawlid*s held in other months, in contrast, nine are explicitly stated to have been performed in observance of special occasions in the lives of the hosting families: two *ʿaqīqa*s[18] (a sacrifice performed for a newborn infant), one engagement,[19] four weddings,[20] one funeral,[21] and one gala arrival in town (by the ruler's wife).[22] This distribution suggests that the *mawlid* was an appropriate component of life-cycle celebrations throughout the year. Of the ten *mawlid*s explicitly stated to have been held in venues other than the home, only one was associated with a life-cycle event; this was the congregational prayer held for a deceased person *in absentia*, a rite that is inherently appropriate to perform in the mosque. Location also seems to correlate with gender. Of the six *mawlid*s identified by Ibn Ṭawq as being hosted by women, only one is explicitly stated to have been held in a location outside of the home; it was hosted by the wife of the local ruler in a madrasa.[23]

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14   Held in Rabīʿ al-Awwal: Ibn Ṭawq, *Taʿlīq* vol. 1, 57, 156–157, 238, 239, 243 (two *mawlids*), 345, 346, 347, 353; vol. 2, 599; vol. 3, 1102, 1167, 1240; vol. 4, 1659, 1865 (two *mawlids*), 1866. Held in other months: ibid. vol. 1, 60, 356; vol. 2, 619, 861, 1052; vol. 3, 1106–1107, 1167, 1107, 1178, 1193, 1195, 1255, 1268, 1277, 1334, 1344, 1400, 1456, 1482; vol. 4, 1589, 1838, 1844, 1851–1852, 1852.
15   Ibn Ṭawq, *Taʿlīq* vol. 1, 347.
16   Ibid. vol. 1, 353.
17   Ibid. vol. 4, 1866.
18   Ibid. vol. 4, 1844, 1852.
19   Ibid. vol. 1, 60. The "(katb al-)kitāb" is the drawing up of the marriage contract, and thus technically a wedding; however, the marriage was customarily not consummated until a wedding party held on another occasion.
20   Ibid. vol. 2, 861, 1052; 1193, 1195.
21   Ibid. vol. 2, 619.
22   Ibid. vol. 4, 1851–1852.
23   Ibid. vol. 1, 60.

The performance of *mawlid*s in conjunction with life-cycle celebrations is also recorded by other sources for Damascus in this period. The historian Ibn Ṭūlūn[24] refers to a *mawlid* that was recited at the conclusion of a contract of marriage,[25] another at the joint wedding of two brothers to two sisters,[26] and a third held by the governor of Damascus in honour of the circumcision of two of his sons; the location is specified only in the case of the ruler's celebration.[27] These events, falling somewhat after the timespan covered by Ibn Ṭawq, reinforce the patterns suggested by his diary: *mawlid*s were performed in conjunction with a wide range of life-cycle celebrations in all months of the Islamic calendar.

Why was the *mawlid* ceremony so well-fitted to transition points in the life of the household, breaking free from its calendrical association with the month of the Prophet's birth? One factor that may help to explain the deep interrelation between the *mawlid*, life-cycle celebrations, and the selection of a domestic setting is that the *mawlid* was a form of pious hospitality; in a basic sense, many *mawlid*s were parties, or more technically feasts (*walā'im*, sing. *walīma*). The association between the two was such that, asked about the legitimacy of the celebration of the Prophet's birth, Abū Zurʿa al-ʿIrāqī (d. 826/1423) observed that 'banquets (*al-walīma*) and feeding people are desirable at all times'.[28] Hosting a festive meal was not merely a convivial activity that strengthened a household's social network and enmeshed it in ties of reciprocity, but a religiously meritorious and auspicious act that was strongly recommended for joyful or sensitive moments in the life of an individual or a family. The historian Ibn Ṭūlūn produced a composition on the various occasions on which it was religiously commendable to hold a *walīma*. The paradigmatic case was the wedding, the only occasion explicitly mandated by the Prophet. In addition, Ibn Ṭūlūn argues that it is religiously commendable to hold a banquet in honour of a new mother's recovery from childbirth, the *ʿaqīqa* sacrifice on behalf of a newborn child, the circumcision of a boy, a child's memorization of part or all of the Qur'an, an engagement, the building of a house, the safe return of a traveller, or even a death. In short, the gathering of people and the serving of food were appropriate to any landmark in a

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24   On this figure, see Conermann S., "Ibn Ṭūlūn (d. 955/1548): Life and Works", *Mamluk Studies Review* 8, 1 (2004) 115–139. Ibn Ṭūlūn used Ibn Ṭawq's diary as a source (Wollina, *Zwanzig Jahre* 26).

25   In Ramadan of 915 AH. See Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākahat al-khillan fī ḥawādith all-zamān*, ed. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā (Cairo: 1381/1962) vol. 1, 356.

26   In Shaʿban of 921 (ibid. vol. 1, 386).

27   In Jumada II of 926 (ibid. vol. 2, 110).

28   See Katz, *Birth of the Prophet* 71–2.

Muslim's life trajectory, and to any auspicious incident that might occur along the way.

Of course, this list of banqueting opportunities bears a strong resemblance to the list of occasions for *mawlid*s that emerges from Ibn Ṭawq's diary and other contemporary sources. It would appear from the evidence available in the diary that not all *mawlid*s were banquets, but those held for major life-cycle events often and perhaps almost always were. The close connection between the two is suggested by a case where Ibn Ṭawq reports attending a *walīma* and observes, 'I was told that it was a wedding, but that was not true; it was just a *mawlid*'.[29] Banquets appear to be explicitly mentioned only in conjunction with festive domestic *mawlid*s, not with those held in sufi lodges or mosques. However, it is impossible to make a firm generalization because the location of a *mawlid* is often unspecified.[30]

*Mawlid*s fit seamlessly into the model of pious hospitality associated with the hosting of *walīma*s, as both were focused on the intertwined objectives of earning religious merit and cementing social ties. Ibn Ṭūlūn cites his own teacher's declaration that the holding of a banquet 'displays God's blessings and [expresses] gratitude for them, and earns merit and affection'.[31] Holding a festive gathering in commemoration of the Prophet's birth was meritorious because it constituted a performative expression of love and rejoicing over the Prophet, sentiments that were understood to have salvific value.[32]

*Mawlid*s held in celebration of happy life cycle events were thus both pious rituals and parties, and the evidence from this period suggests that some tension prevailed over their proper tone. Ibn Ṭawq's immediate religious circle seems to have promoted a rigidly normative approach to the *mawlid*. Two of the men whose activities as *mawlid* reciters are most often mentioned by Ibn Ṭawq are Burhān al-Dīn al-Nājī and his pupil Barakāt ibn al-Kayyāl.[33] Al-Nājī's *mawlid* text (which survives in manuscript) is a lengthy sourcebook of learned

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29   Ibn Ṭawq, *Taʿlīq* vol. 3, 1107.

30   See, for instance Ibn Ṭawq, *Taʿlīq* vol. 3, 1482.

31   Shams al-Dīn Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Faṣṣ al-khawātim fī-mā qīla fīʾl-walāʾim*, ed. Nizār Abāẓa (Damascus: 1403/1983) 42.

32   See Katz, *Birth of the Prophet* 104–142.

33   Ibn Ṭawq, *Taʿlīq* vol. 1, 60, 156–157, 345; vol. 2, 599; vol. 3, 1167, 117; see also Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākaha* vol. 2, 101. For a biographical notice on al-Nājī, see Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥimṣī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān wa-wafayāt al-shuyūkh waʾl-aqrān*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Ṣaydā: 1419/1999), vol. 1, 384–385. Al-Nājī was the student of Ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Dimashqī, one of the most influential *mawlid* authors in Damascus in the fifteenth century. For a biographical notice on Barakāt ibn al-Kayyāl, see Najm al-Dīn al-Ghazzī, *al-Kawākib al-sāʾira bi-aʿyān al-miʾa al-ʿāshira*, with notes by Khalīl al-Manṣūr (Beirut: 1418/1997) vol. 1, 167–168.

disquisitions on matters associated with the *mawlid* from which, he explains, a reciter can select at will for the needs of a specific occasion.[34] It is deeply concerned with issues of religious orthodoxy and factual correctness. For instance, al-Nājī dismisses the practice of standing at the mention of the Prophet's birth as an illegitimate ritual innovation,[35] and more generally laments the 'catastrophic innovations' that have been introduced into the *mawlid* ceremony.[36] He indignantly dismisses some of the more vivid accounts of the Prophet's birth even where they had been accepted by prominent earlier scholars[37] and uses the *mawlid* story as a hook for legal digressions.[38]

However, scholars of the censorious cast of al-Nājī competed with reciters who presented themselves more as pious entertainers than as didactic religious guides.[39] A surviving work by Ibn al-Kayyāl inveighs against the 'reciters at gatherings and funerals' who chant the Qur'an with 'the tunes of sinners', which he defines as 'melodies borrowed from music' (*al-anghām al-mustaʿāra min al-mūsīqā*).[40] Our sources suggest that there were indeed other *mawlid* reciters in Damascus at this period who were famed precisely for their musical skill and the beauty of their voices. Ibn Ṭūlūn notes the performance of a *mawlid* recited by Muḥammad al-Juʿaydī, whom he identifies as a muezzin and who is described in another source as 'the head of the *mawlid* [reciters] in Damascus (*raʾīs al-mawlid bi-dimashq*)' and a master of 'the science of melody (*ʿilm al-naghma*)'.[41] He also describes a head muezzin of the Umayyad Mosque who died in 885/1480 as the possessor of a proverbially lovely voice and as a reciter of *mawlid*s.[42] Indeed, over the course of the sixteenth century prominent *mawlid* reciters seem to have been associated both with the office of muezzin

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34 Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd al-Nājī, *Kanz al-rāghibīn al-ʿufāt fī al-ramz ilā al-mawlid al-muḥammadī waʾl-wafāt waʾl-shamāʾil waʾl-muʿjizāt waʾl-dalāʾil wa-mā fāta bihi al-awāʾil waʾl-awākhir*, ms. Cairo, al-Maktaba al-Azharīya, khāṣṣ 4363, ʿāmm 8545, accessed from http://www.alukah.net/library/0/69001/ [last accessed 13 June 2016].

35 Nājī, *Kanz* fol. 24v.

36 Ibid. fol. 26b.

37 E.g. Ibid. fol. 57r.

38 E.g. Ibid. fols. 74r, 84r.

39 A similar tension affected life-cycle celebrations in general. The weddings attended by Ibn Ṭawq range from 'a feast, singing, eating and drinking' (vol. 2, 964) to one he notes to have been celebrated without musical instruments (vol. 4, 1731). It is unclear to what extent these differences arose from financial constraints rather than religious scruples about the legitimacy of music.

40 Zayn al-Din Barakāt ibn Aḥmad, known as Ibn al-Kayyāl, *al-Anjum al-ẓawāhir fī taḥrīm al-qirāʾa bi-luḥūn ahl al-fisq waʾl-kabāʾir,* ed. Mashʿal ibn Bani al-Jabrīn al-Mutayrī (Beirut: 2009) 21–25.

41 Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākaha* vol. 2, 110; Ghazzi, *Kawākib* vol. 3, 70.

42 Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākaha* vol. 1, 22.

and with the art of music that Ibn al-Kayyāl so deplored.[43] Reciters from these circles might also be known for qualities such as the entertaining sharpness of their wit.[44]

In addition to providing religious instruction and religiously respectable entertainment, *mawlid* ceremonies addressed the concerns of Muslims at critical junctures in their biological and social lives by generating vast quantities of religious merit. This merit (*thawāb*) accrued particularly from the invocation of blessings upon the Prophet Muḥammad, which constituted the central component of guests' participation in the ritual. Burhān al-Dīn al-Nājī's *mawlid* text begins with a long disquisition on the comparative merits of different forms of blessing upon the Prophet.[45] The distribution of the merit accruing to *mawlid* participants was a potentially significant matter.[46] The dynamic of symbolic gift-giving and the ties of loyalty it reinforced were not limited to the living participants in the ceremony. It was customary to donate the merit generated by the *mawlid* ceremony to one's deceased kin; another widespread contemporary custom dictated the donation of merit to the Prophet Muḥammad himself. These two customs were not mutually exclusive, as religious merit was not understood to be a zero-sum affair. Like other gracious patrons, the Prophet was expected to reward the humble gifts of his devotees with far greater boons, specifically, intercession on the Day of Judgment.[47] Burhān al-Dīn al-Nājī and Ibn Ṭūlūn both acknowledge the objection that this practice was not only a religious innovation but an implicit insult to the Prophet, whose posthumous status required no enhancement. However, they both affirm the underlying devotional logic by affirming that the Prophet receives credit for each subsequent performance of the meritorious deeds he mandated.[48]

Thus, both directly through the donation of merit to kin and indirectly through the cultivation of a relationship with the Prophet as intercessor for the ceremony's patron and his or her family, a *mawlid* held in a domestic setting could be understood as an act of care directed towards a broad and intergenerational household. Some sense of the vivid and homely ways in which this care was imagined in contemporary Damascus can be gleaned from the text of a book that Ibn Ṭawq reports having borrowed from a friend in 903/1497, Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-Hakārī's *Hadīyat al-aḥyā' ilā al-amwāt* ('Gift of the Living

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43   Ghazzī, *Kawākib* vol. 3, 67, 145.

44   See Ghazzī, *Kawākib* vol. 3, 44.

45   Nājī, *Kanz* fols. 8r–14r.

46   See, for instance, the incident in Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Mufākaha* vol. 1, 109.

47   See Katz, *Birth of the Prophet* 87–96.

48   Nājī, *Kanz*, fols. 109r–113r; Ibn Ṭūlūn, *Faṣṣ al-khawātim* 56.

to the Dead').[49] In this work, the merit donated by the living to their deceased relatives is presented to them in their graves in the form of food, clothing and other gifts.[50] Through the generation and donation of merit, a *mawlid* was thus a form of familial care embracing both the kin assembled in the home and those currently residing in the graveyard.

3 Women's *Mawlid* Celebrations

The *mawlid*'s character as a religious ceremony that both could be performed within the home and served as a form of care for the household may have been among the factors that enhanced the celebration's enduring appeal to women. Women's enthusiastic participation in *mawlid* ceremonies is mentioned in some of the earliest polemics against the practice in the early fourteenth century.[51] Women in Syria this period did have access to mosques, or at least to many major mosques.[52] However, obstacles including menstruation, household duties, and modesty ideals may often have kept them away, giving domestic rituals such as the *mawlid* a comparatively more prominent place in the overall shape of women's piety. As we have already seen, Ibn Ṭawq mentions a number of *mawlid* celebrations hosted by women. Other sources also occasionally mention women's *mawlid*s; the contemporary Syrian historian Ibn al-imsī records that in the month of the Prophet's birthday of 922/1516 the daughter of the governor of Damascus held a *mawlid* that was attended by 'all the ladies of the town, both great and small'.[53]

Ibn Ṭawq's scant information only allows us to speculate about the distinctive lineaments of women's piety. Interestingly, none of the *mawlid*s Ibn Ṭawq specifies as being held by a woman is explicitly identified as occurring in celebration of a life-cycle event. (One *mawlid* held in conjunction with a wedding is stated to have occurred in the home of the bride's mother; however, it is not clear that it is 'her' *mawlid*, unlike several others mentioned by Ibn Ṭawq.)[54] Nevertheless, I hesitate to conclude from this that women were less involved

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49   Ibn Ṭawq, *Taʿlīq* vol. 4, 1556.
50   See Katz, *Birth of the Prophet* 92–3.
51   See the comments of Tāj al-Dīn al-Fākihānī (d. 1331), translated in Kaptein, *Muḥammad's Birthday Festival* 53, and those of Ibn al-Ḥājj (d. 1336), *al-Madkhal*, ed. Tawfīq Ḥamdān (Beirut: 1995) vol. 2, 235.
52   On women's mosque access in Syria, see Katz M.H., *Women in the Mosque: A History of Legal Thought and Social Practice* (New York: 2014) 145–166.
53   Ibn al-Ḥimsī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān* vol. 2, 281.
54   See vol. 1, 239, 243; vol. 4, 1865. There is also one *mawlid* held by a woman, for an unstated reason, in the month of Rajab (vol. 1, 239).

than men in *mawlid*s as life-cycle rituals. Ibn Ṭawq tells us very little about the specifics of celebrations hosted by women, although he mentions attending at least one. For instance, he notes of one wedding that the men's banquet included the recitation of a *mawlid*; whether the same was true of the women's banquet held on the following day goes unrecorded.[55] We also do not know whether most or all domestic *mawlid*s were single-sex affairs.

Some sense of the role of the *mawlid* in women's piety in Ibn Ṭawq's time is offered by his Damascene contemporary ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūniyya (d. 922/1516), 'one of the most learned and prolific women scholars in all of Islamic history'.[56] Much of her impressive literary output comprised devotional works about the Prophet Muḥammad, including two preserved *mawlid*s.[57] Her literary works of course lack the fine quotidian detail of a diary like Ibn Ṭawq's, as well as its specificity about spatial locations. However, her framing comments about the inspiration and objectives of her *mawlid*-related works offer some evidence of their relation to domestic space and concerns.

Her account of the inspiration for the composition of the longer of her two *mawlid*s has already attracted the attention of scholars. She writes:

> When God bestowed upon me a vision of the Prophet, I was in residence in Honored Mecca (may God increase her in honor and glory!). I experienced a ritual disability[58] that prevented me from going down to the Noble Sanctuary. It was a Friday eve [i.e., Thursday night]. I lay down on a bed in a porch overlooking the Honored Kaʿba and the Glorified Sanctuary; it happened that a resident of Mecca[59] was reciting the *mawlid* of the Messenger (peace be upon him!), and voices were raised invoking blessings upon [the Prophet] – until I nodded off and dreamed that I was among a group of women. Someone said, 'The Prophet has come!' There befell me an awe that took me away from myself until the Prophet (peace be upon him!) passed before me […].[60]

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55   Ibn Ṭawq, *Taʿlīq* vol. 2, 861.

56   Homerin Th.E., *Emanations of Grace: Mystical Poems by ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūnīya (d. 923/1517)* (Louisville: 2011) 16.

57   See Ḥasan Muḥammad al-Rabābiʿa, *ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūniyya, shāʿira* (Irbid: 1997) 59–65, esp. 60.

58   *ʿĀriḍ*, pl. *ʿawāriḍ*, one of a set of disqualifiers or disabilities that renders one incapable of bearing or validly discharging an obligation in Islamic law (see *al-Mawsūʿa al-fiqhīya*, s.v. *ahlīya*, ¶¶ 25–43).

59   *Mujāwir*, a term that implies intentional pious residence in Mecca or another sacred site (rather than designating a person who is simply Meccan by birth).

60   Cited in Rabābiʿa, *ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūnīya* 53; translated in Homerin, *Emanations* 13. My translation diverges from Prof. Homerin's in several places, and is based on al-Rabābiʿa's transcription of this passage.

She then asks for (and is promised) his intercession. In this anecdote, a ritual disability – we may safely assume it to have been menstruation – forestalls al-Bāʿūniyya from entering the mosque. She remains in a liminal space secluded from the precincts of the sanctuary but auditorily accessible to it. Her visionary dream occurs within her home (albeit a temporary one), the only place where a high-status woman would be likely to lie down and slumber (we may imagine that absent her ritual disability, she might have attended the *mawlid* in the mosque but perhaps would not have slept and dreamed).[61]

In the self-narrative of ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūniyya, as for the Jewish woman in the tale with which this chapter began, exposure to the *mawlid* ceremony induces a dream encounter with the Prophet Muḥammad that draws him at least notionally within her own domestic space. In his diary Ibn Ṭawq records two *mawlid*s held in private homes that were inspired by dreams of the Prophet, one of which was experienced by a woman.[62] Dreams of the Prophet were particularly cherished because the Prophet is reported to have declared that 'whoever sees me in a dream, will see me while awake [i.e., among the blessed on the Day of Resurrection]; the Devil cannot take on my form'.[63]

Al-Bāʿūniyya is best known as a Ṣūfī, and certainly the elaborate rhymed prose introduction to her *mawlid* text *al-Mawrid al-ahnā fīʾl-mawlid al-asnā* is saturated with mystical terminology.[64] It also prominently invokes her Ṣūfī lineage as well as her biological one.[65] However, the overtly articulated

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61   For women attending a public *mawlid* in the Sacred Mosque of Mecca somewhat later in the sixteenth century, see Katz, *Women in the Mosque* 210.

62   Ibn Ṭawq, *Taʿlīq* vol. 1, 347, 353.

63   Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ* (Vaduz, Liechtenstein: 2000) vol. 3, 1415 (*Kitāb al-Taʿbīr, Bāb man raʾā al-nabī ṣallā Allāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam fīʾl-manām*). On attitudes towards the significance and authority of dreams in Islamic sources, with particular attention to dreams of the Prophet Muḥammad, see Kinberg L., "Dreams", in Fleet K. – Krämer G. – Matringe D. – Nawas J. – Rowson E. (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Third Edition (Leiden: 2016), and the literature cited there.

64   I used the version of this text edited by Fāris Aḥmad al-ʿAlāwī and Luʾayy ʿAbd al-Ḥakīm Ghannām in Fāris Aḥmad al-ʿAlāwī, *ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūniyya al-dimashqīya ashhar aʿlām dimashq awākhir ʿahd al-mamālīk* (Damascus: n.d.) 117–179. In order to confirm the content of the marginal notations discussed below, I also consulted a digitized copy of the original manuscript from the Maʿhad al-Makhṭūṭāt, Cairo (Tārīkh-534, bar code 5685). I thank Guy Burak for obtaining this copy.

65   al-ʿAlāwī, *ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūniyya* 123–126. She commences the main body of *al-Mawrid al-ahnā* by stating that it was written at the request of those (masculine plural) to neglect whose wishes would constitute unfilial conduct, and that 'What I ask from God Most High is that he include me, them, and those who are present with me within the blessings of this Beloved [i.e., Muḥammad] and give us the best portion and share of the gifts of proximity [to him]'. It is unclear whether the (symbolically?) parental figures to whom she obliquely attributes the impetus for the composition are the older generation of her

goals of her *mawlid* texts relate less centrally to the distinctively Ṣūfī objectives of moral self-refinement and ecstatic unification with the divine than to more conventional aspirations to evoke the Prophet's blessings and intercession for herself and her household. The central narrative emphasizes the milestones of the Prophet's ancestry and early life, including (but not limited to) the lifecycle events (such as birth, *ʿaqīqa*, marriage, and death) that contemporary Damascenes often observed with *mawlid*s. It severely compresses the main events of his prophetic mission – the onset of revelation, his ascent to the heavens (*miʿrāj*), and the emigration to Medina all occur in a single sentence[66] – and omits any mention of the Prophet's many battles or the institution of any feature of Islamic ritual or law. The most prominent *foci* of the story are thus the lifecycle events and salvific role of the Prophet, not religio-legal edification or mystical insight.

In another place in this *mawlid* text, ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūniyya overtly consecrates the auspicious power of her devotional writing on the *mawlid* to the welfare of her family. The surviving manuscript, written in her own handwriting, closes with a note listing the birthdates of her children; she states that she has done so in order that her children can partake of the *baraka* of the Prophet's birth.[67] We cannot know if she ever used her *mawlid* text in the context of a life-cycle celebration (she seems to have entered her children's birthdates retrospectively, not on the occasions of their births), nor can we know whether any ritual performance that did occur took place within her home, but this note suggests how *mawlid* piety could bring to bear the auspicious aura of the Prophet on one's own familial concerns. Of course, the point is not that domestic concerns were specific to women. However, it seems possible that the division of religious and affective labour may have disproportionately assigned to women the expression of such concerns. Much of ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūniyya's œuvre addresses the most ethereal dimensions of the Sufi tradition,[68] but the *mawlid* seems to have been a congenial site for her more homely preoccupations.

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family or her Sufi mentors; parents, spiritual mentors, and offspring are all mentioned in the immediately preceding blessings. (al- ʿAlāwī , *ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūniyya* 126).

66   al-ʿAlāwī, *ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūniyya* 161.

67   al-Rabābiʿa, Ḥasan Muḥammad *ʿAʾisha al-Baʾuniya, shaʾira* (Irbid: 1418/1997) 47. Al-Bāʿūniyya considered her children particularly eligible for the Prophet's blessings because, through their father, they were his descendants; her notation also reflects concern that they receive the material benefits that at that time accrued to registered descendants of the Prophet (see al-Rabābiʿa, *ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūniyya* 47).

68   See, for instance, ʿĀʾisha al-Bāʿūniyya, *Emanations of Grace,* trans. Homerin.

4   Conclusions

Overall, domestic *mawlid* ceremonies in fifteenth – and sixteenth-century Damascus appear as occasions where the resources of the household were mobilized to bless the home and family with the presence of pious persons, the recitation of holy texts and perhaps the symbolic presence of the Prophet Muḥammad himself. *Mawlid*s projected the pious profile of the household and garnered social goodwill at moments of family transition, as well as maximizing the propitious forces of religious merit (*thawāb*) and powerful blessing (*baraka*). A Damascus native who composed a *mawlid* text several generations before the figures discussed here claimed that the experientially proven blessings of his composition included the fact 'that it is never recited in a house but that its owner experiences security for himself, his wealth and his family and is not harmed in that year, and until the same time [of the next year]'.[69] An anonymous devotional text that circulated widely in later centuries claimed that:

> any house, mosque, or quarter where the Prophet's *mawlid* is recited, the angels surround that house, mosque, or quarter, the angels invoke blessings on the people of that place, and God envelops them with [His] mercy and satisfaction […]. Any Muslim who recites the Prophet's *mawlid* in his house, God removes drought, pestilence, fire flood, blights, afflictions, hatred, envy, the evil eye, and thieves from the people of that house […].[70]

In both direct and indirect ways, domestic *mawlid* ceremonies were understood to enhance the well-being of both house and household.

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69   Katz, *Birth of the Prophet* 82–3.

70   Ibid. 85.

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CHAPTER 9

Prayers at the Nuptial Bed: Spiritual Guidance on Consummation in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Epithalamia

Jungyoon Yang

The first volume of marriage registers from the Oude Kerk, Amsterdam's principal parish church at the time, recorded a momentous event in the city's history that took place in May 1578. It was the so-called Alteration, when the city's Catholic government was deposed and replaced by a Protestant one.[1] Unlike the Catholics, Calvinists did not regard marriage as a sacrament, but the ministers of the newly Reformed Oude Kerk nevertheless continued recording the unions they solemnized in the church as if nothing had happened:[2]

> Starting in the year 1565, first the Roman priests recorded herein all the persons whom they married in their manner up until the year 1578, the 23rd day of May […]. And also recorded herein in that same aforesaid year of 1578, the 11th of May, are the names of the very first persons who were married in God's congregation by a servant of the holy Gospel.[3]

Calvin had said that marriage was 'a good and holy ordinance of God', but, he continued, 'so also are agriculture, architecture, shoemaking, hair-cutting

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1 On church wedding ceremonies after the Alteration, see Roodenburg H., *Onder censuur. De kerkelijke tucht in de gereformeerde gemeente van Amsteradam, 1578–1700* (Hilversum: 1990) 90–95.

2 Nierop L. van, "De bruidegoms van Amsterdam van 1578 tot 1601", *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 48 (1933) 337–359; 49 (1934) 136–160, 329–344; 52 (1937) 144–162; Knappert L., "De gereformeerde kerk in haren strijd om het wettig huwelijk", *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 2 (1903) 217–275, 359–396; Haks D., *Huwelijk en gezin in Holland in de 17de en 18de eeuw. Processtukken en moralisten over aspecten van het laat 17de- en 18de-eeuwse gezinsleven* (Assen: 1982) 114–116.

3 *Trouwregisters Oude Kerk*, inventory no. 969 (Amsterdam: Stadsarchief) 1: 'Beginnende Anno 1565 voor eerst hebben de Roemsche priesters hier in aengetekent Alle die Parsoonen die sijluiden op hare wijse getrout hebben tot de Jare 1578 den drieentwintichste dach maijo […]. Ende intselfde voorsch. 1578en Jaer den elfden maijo soo is hier in mede aengetekent de namen vandie parsoonen die alder eerst door een dienaer des he Evangelije in godts gemeinte sijn getrout'.

legitimate ordinances of God, but they are not sacraments'.[4] A Calvinist marriage was a covenant involving the entire religious community, and the minister's task was restricted to blessing the couple and instructing them in their spiritual duties.

The new ecclesiastical rite dictated by Protestant dogma was followed not long afterwards in the northern Netherlands by a revival of the genre of epithalamia, verses celebrating a wedding.[5] It was a development that was embraced with great enthusiasm by Flemish immigrants who had fled the Catholic south and had prospered in the northern provinces, especially in Amsterdam.[6] There are two prime characteristics of the epithalamia they commissioned. First, the main poetic strands were taken from biblical episodes, so were very similar to what a preacher would have said at a wedding.[7] These replaced the mythological and classical allusions employed by learned poets in their classical Latin encomia for powerful ruling families and monarchs on such occasions. A political message was largely absent from seventeenth-century Dutch epithalamia for the mercantile elite, the purpose of which was solely to commemorate a single, special day in the lives of the newly-weds, with content that was focused exclusively on the private circumstances of the families, friends and social circles to which the couple belonged.[8] Second, some seventeenth-century Dutch epithalamia were published as separate booklets, and were by no means

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4   Calvin John, *The Institutes of Christian Religion*, ed. and trans. T. Lane – H. Osborne (Grand Rapids: 1987) 34; see also Laqua-O'Donnell S., *Women and the Counter-Reformation in Early Modern Münster* (Oxford: 2014) 76–77.

5   The general guides to the Dutch epithalamic genre are Schenkeveld-van der Dussen M.A., "Poëzie als gebruiksartikel: gelegenheidsgedichten in de zeventiende eeuw", in Spies M. – Berg W. van den (eds.), *Historische letterkunde. Facetten van vakbeoefening* (Groningen: 1984) 75–92; Bouman J., *Nederlandse gelegenheidsgedichten voor 1700 in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek te 's-Gravenhage* (Nieuwkoop: 1982) VII–XX; Steur A. van der, *Gelegenheidsgedichten. Los verschenen gedrukte gelegenheidsgedichten op Nederlandse personen, 17e–20e eeuw* (Haarlem: 2004) 5–31; Geerdink N., "The Appropriation of the Genre of Nuptial Poetry by Katharina Lescailje (1649–1711)", in Gilleir A. (ed.), *Women Writing Back / Writing Women Back. Transnational Perspectives from the Late Middle Ages to the Dawn of the Modern Era* (Leiden: 2010) 163–200.

6   A general introduction to the illustrations of Dutch nuptial booklets and the example of Leeuwarden is summarized in Yang J., "Starter's Contribution to a Frisian Wedding", in Boersma P. – Brand H. – Spoelstra J. (eds.), *Philologia Frisica Anno 2012* (Leeuwarden: 2014) 155–173.

7   Schenkeveld-van der Dussen M.A., "Christus, Hymenaeus of de 'teelzucht'", in Witstein S.F. – Grootes E.K. (eds.), *Visies op Vondel na 300* (The Hague: 1979) 11–25.

8   By contrast to the religious epithalamia for the weddings of the Dutch merchant class, Dubrow's study shows how the epithalamia for royal weddings conveyed political messages. See further, Dubrow H., *A Happier Eden. The Politics of Marriage in the Stuart Epithalamium* (Ithaca: 1990).

run-of-the-mill products, but were sumptuously decorated with illustrations.[9] In other words, the vogue for Dutch epithalamia gained currency as a form of bespoke luxury ephemera, and the epithalamic genre established a new readership for a highly specific combination of word and image in the early seventeenth century.

This essay demonstrates how the verbal and visual elements of Dutch illustrated epithalamia were manipulated in order to create a ritual for reinforcing a couple's pious mindset in preparation for married life, and to associate word and image in the booklets in such a way as to unify the bodies and minds of the couple into a single, God-fearing entity. The tendency of stressing biblical exemplars in poems and illustrations, rather than adopting pagan personages from the stock of poetic motifs of Latin epithalamia, is already apparent from the start of the vogue for these booklets in the 1610s.[10] Later nuptial publications continued this ethic of the Protestant, Calvinist wedding, but widened the range of exemplars to include virtuous messages from contemporary illustrated books, such as didactic emblems books and songbooks. While the combination of devotional words and images was well-received by Dutch patrons and readers, the function of nuptial booklets changed from being a commemorative token of a wedding to a meditative tool used for reading religious messages, looking at images and reflecting on the admirable, pious behaviour of Christian spouses. This modification of word and image for wedding days led to an enormous in quality across the epithalamic genre in the Netherlands, especially when the different social perceptions of marriage were embedded in a Calvinist framework after the Alteration.

The aim of this essay is to differentiate the use and role of Dutch illustrated epithalamia from previous and international uses. In order to trace how the booklets could be used for nuptial prayers seeking God's guidance in a virtuous marriage, this essay first examines portrayals of Tobias and Sarah, which amplified the visual impact of the act of kneeling and praying to God before retiring to the nuptial bed. Other scenes from Dutch book illustrations will be examined in more detail in light of the moral instruction about chastity before marriage, a social code that was upheld in diverse book genres, such as emblem books, devotional songbooks and conduct books, as well as epithalamia. These two approaches will be used in the case study of an epithalamic booklet of 1637 in order to demonstrate how a very fervent Calvinist epithalamium borrowed six emblems from pictures in Jacob Cats's *Proteus ofte Minne-beelden.*

9　　Yang, "Starter's Contribution" 162–169.

10　　Yang J., "Trusting Hands: The *Dextrarum Iunctio* in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Marriage Iconography", *Dutch Crossing*, on-line publication, DOI:10.1080/03096564.2016.1139786.

Two conclusions will emerge from the case study, namely that Dutch epithalamia exchanged the voluptuous themes of traditional epithalamia for thought-provoking devices of word and image proclaiming standardized Calvinist values, and that they functioned as an introduction for the couple to their devotional life by guiding them in praying and meditating on the inner meaning of their marriage.

1   A Pious Exemplar for a Wedding Night

The style and content of seventeenth-century vernacular epithalamia did not appear out of nowhere, but played into a long tradition, namely the ancient custom of singing nuptial songs outside the bridal chamber.[11] The classical author Menander Rhetor included exhortations and encouragement to enter the bridal chamber, describing the lovable mood of consummation: 'I am convinced the Cupids are there, their bows drawn, stringing their arrows, the tips ready smeared with the ointment of desire, whereby they will ensure that the two hearts breathe together'.[12] This specific advice given by epithalamists was echoed in a sixteenth-century Latin epithalamium of around 1535 by Janus Secundus: 'Soon she'll play an even more voluptuous game, / speaking sweeter endearments, / making more wanton use of her fingers, / coming up with sexier sins'.[13] The dominant theme of *lascivia lususque*, the 'voluptuous game' of lovemaking, was the well-known topos of wedding poems, and mastery in describing the intellectual interplay between a bridal couple and their guests regarding the wedding night, as well as referring to sexual acts in the nuptial bed using teasing erotic wit, were the highlight of learned epithalamia.[14] Speaking of the excessive use of poetic conceits relating to sensual, earthly

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11   Wheeler A.L., "Tradition in the Epithalamium", *The American Journal of Philology* 51 (1930) 205–223; Wheeler A.L., *Catullus and the Traditions of Ancient Poetry* (Berkeley: 1934); Greene T.M., "Spenser and the Epithalamic Convention", *Comparative Literature* 9 (1957) 215–228; Babin M., *Epithalamia. Classical Traditions and Changing Responses*, Ph.D. dissertation (University of California: 1978) 172–173; Forster L., *The Icy Fire. Five Studies in European Petrarchism* (Cambridge: 1969); Tufte V., *The Poetry of Marriage. The Epithalamium in Europe and its Development in England* (Los Angeles: 1970).

12   Menander L., *Menander Rhetor*, trans. D.A. Russell – N.G. Wilson (Oxford: 1981) 145.

13   Murgatroyd P., *The Amatory Elegies of Johannes Secundus* (Leiden: 2000) 202.

14   On Italian epithalamists who were classically inspired and who dedicated their nuptial verses to Italian court culture in Ferrara, Naples, and Milan, see further D'Elia A., "Marriage, Sexual Pleasure, and Learned Brides in the Wedding Orations of Fifteenth-Century Italy", Renaissance Quarterly 55 (2002) 379–433; D'Elia A., *The Renaissance of Marriage in Fifteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge, MA – London: 2004) esp. 35–50.

love in epithalamia, Forster says 'some safety valve becomes necessary: a genre in which, initially, the conventionally impossible surrender of the lady could be envisaged at all, and in which, furthermore, those sensual pleasures could be celebrated which the convention proscribed from treatment elsewhere', so that poets could avoid their occasional poetry being read as pornography.[15] As this paper will demonstrate, the modulation of sexual devices in the Dutch epithalamic publications would become far more rigorous than simply controlling the level of erotic expressions and subjects by closing the literary safety valve.[16] This was a voluntary mechanism designed to spare the blushes of the happy couple.

The new convention of including occasional verses by both amateur and professional poets for marriages between members of the Amsterdam elite can be seen as the revival of the epithalamic tradition that had been transferred from Sappho to fifteenth-century Italian humanists, and definitively established as a poetical practice in Scaliger's *Poetices* (1561) and George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589).[17] What is often missing in Dutch vernacular epithalamia, though, is the playful erotic wit that created a mood of loving intimacy and implicitly encouraged sexual desire between the bride and groom.[18] Dutch epithalamists eschewed pompous and erudite knowledge of the art of classical poetry, and replaced the *topoi* of humanist motifs with biblical commonplaces of good wishes for the bridal couple, as if anticipating

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15   Forster, *The Icy Fire* 116.

16   Schenkeveld-van der Dussen M.A., "Bruilofts- en liefdeslyriek in de 18e eeuw: de rol van de literaire conventies", *De Nieuwe Taalgids* 67 (1974) 449–461, esp. 451: 'Voorts dient er in het gedicht melding gemaakt te worden van 'lascivia lususque'; men wijst op de vrees van de bruid voor de komende strijd, maar ook op de komende overwinning; men spreekt wensen uit voor een spoedig nageslacht. [...] Kortom, het is duidelijk dat sex volgens de theorie in een huwelijksgedicht thuishoort – al wijst Scaliger wat plichtmatig op de gevaren van te grote loszinnigheid – en uit de practijk blijkt dat deze voorschriften ook gevolgd werden'.

17   Scaliger helped establish the guidelines for writing occasional poetry because he made it easier for poets to deal with the subject matter of the epithalamic genre by summarizing the six *loci communes*: the groom's desire for the bride, praise of the couple, good wishes, an allusion to *lascivia lususque*, hopes for fruitfulness in offspring and fortune, and an appeal to the guests to depart and let the couple retire to the nuptial bed. See further, Scaliger Julius Caesar, *Poetices libri septem / Sieben Bücher über die Dichtkunst*, ed. and trans. M. Fuhrmann – L. Deitz, 6 vols. (Stuttgart: 1994–2003) vol. 3, 64, 66. Puttemham also included the genre of epithalamia in his treatise, chapter 26, "The Maner of Reioysings at Marriages and Weddings": Puttenham George, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London, Richard Field: 1589; facs. of the first edition, Menston: 1968) 64–68.

18   Schenkeveld-van der Dussen M.A., "Bruiloftsdichten in de tale Kanaäns: het probleem van de onverstaanbaarheid", *De Nieuwe Taalgids* 75 (1982) 50–60; Schenkeveld-van der Dussen, "Christus, Hymenaeus".

a national cliché of following a modest, God-fearing Calvinist lifestyle. In addition to the religious emphasis in epithalamia, the Dutch saw an enhanced role for illustration based on the classical idea of the sister arts by combining the verses with images. Popular poets and skilled artists joined forces to turn the booklets into something more than fleeting accompaniments to a social occasion, and contributed to the sophistication of their audience by varying the delights conveyed by word and image.[19]

The contents of the verses therefore had a major impact on the iconographic programmes of illustrations on the title pages, which served to announce the contents of the text itself. If the poet were to follow the formula of classical epithalamia, referring to *lascivia lususque* alone, the accompanying illustrations would have been totally out of keeping with the ethos of a Christian wedding. In Dutch epithalamic booklets the religious messages corresponded to the adornments of the frontispieces, which encapsulated biblical episodes in order to sermonize on virtuous Christian marriage.

This is in marked contrast to the epithalamic booklet for the wedding of Rombout Jacobsz the Younger and Hillegonda van Baesdorp, designed by Claes Jansz Visscher, which illustrates how a *pictura* of a love emblem – 'les deux sont un', with a Cupid grafting two different trees together in order to represent the epigram of 'the two are one' – could be given a religious significance by featuring other biblical examples, such as the first biblical union of Adam and Eve bonded by God's will, as represented by the vertical tetragrammaton for Jehovah beside the standing Eve.[20] [Fig. 9.1] The four scenes in the corners are the meeting of Isaac and Rebecca from Genesis 24; Christ's first miracle at the Wedding at Cana from John 1; the nuptials of Tobias and Sara from Tobit 8; and a family saying grace from Psalm 128, with its metaphors of the wife as a fruitful vine and children as olive plants.[21] This illustrative repertoire highlights the

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19   Yang, "Starter's Contribution".

20   The early example of 'Les deux sont un' can be found in Heinsius Daniël, *Quaeris quid sit Amor* (Amsterdam, Herman de Buck: 1601) fols. F4v–G1r: "Les deux sont un [19]". Replacing God's presence with the tetragrammaton in the scene of *Adam and Eve* was in line with the Calvinist dogma of not depicting God in human form. Prints designed by Claes Jansz Visscher have been studied in relation to his fervent beliefs as an ultra-orthodox Calvinist expressed in his radical broadsheets denouncing Remonstrants and Catholics. His purpose was clearly to enshrine Calvinist views about nuptial imagery. On Visscher's religious position, see Orenstein N. – Luijten G. – Schuckman Ch. – Leeflang H., "Print Publishers in the Netherlands 1580–1620", in Luijten G. – Suchtelen A. van (eds.), *Dawn of the Golden Age. Northern Netherlandish art, 1580–1620*, exh. cat., Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam: 1993) 167–200, esp. 189–195.

21   On the subject of the family saying grace executed by Dutch graphic artists, such as De Gheyn II, Crispijn van de Passe, Pieter Serwouters, and Visscher between 1595 and 1610,
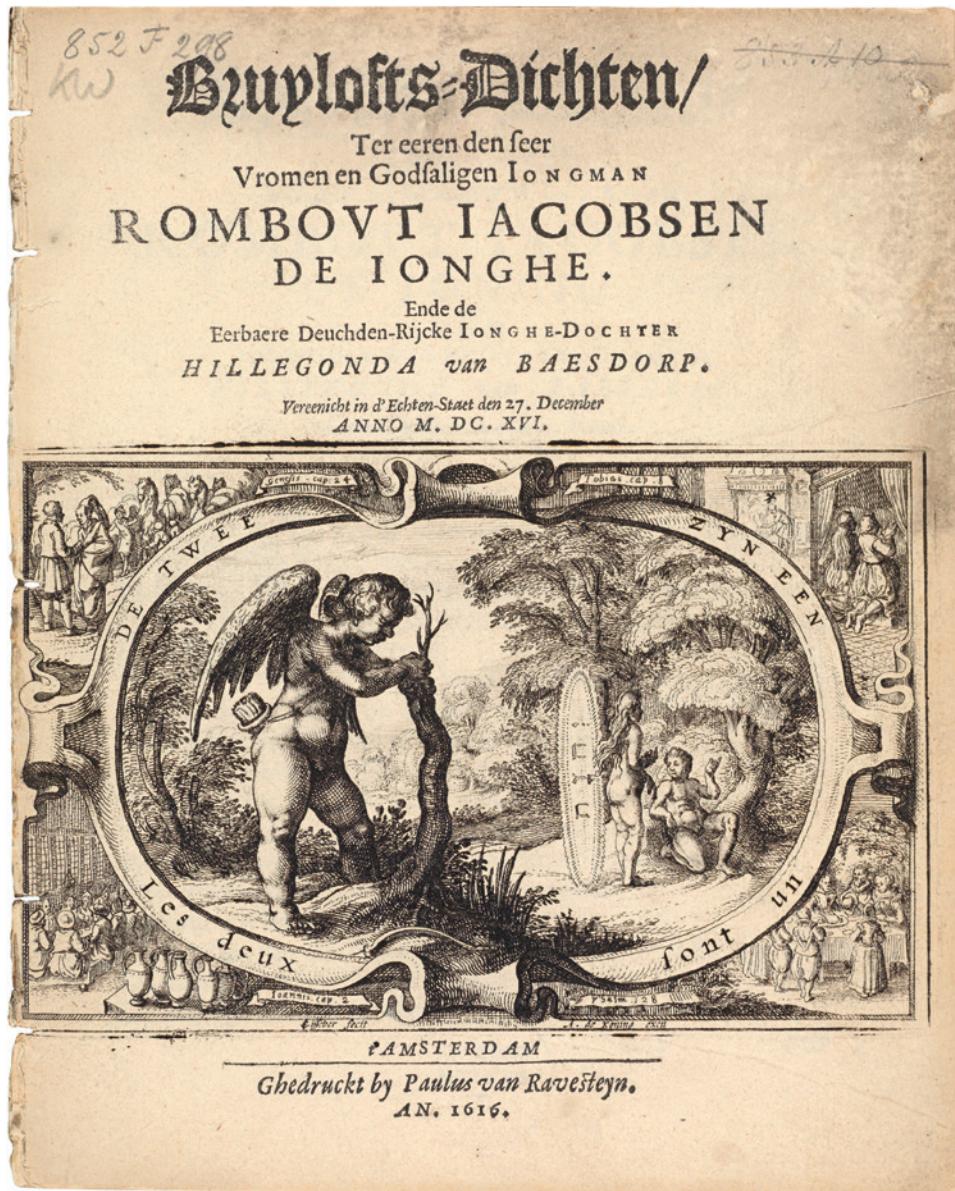
FIGURE 9.1 Claes Jansz Visscher, frontispiece of *Bruylofts-dichten* [...] *Rombovt Iacobsen de ionghe* [...] *Hillegonda van Baesdorp* [...] (Amsterdam, Paulus van Ravesteyn: 1616). The Hague, National Library of the Netherlands

standard epithalamic usage that was highly regarded as a credit to the author, the patron and, by extension, to the audience too. Most Dutch epithalamic title pages did not embody the poetic motifs of carnal desire and the sexual connotations of classical epithalamia, which would have been abhorrent – lustful and unchaste.[22]

Among these repertoires, the wedding night of Tobias and Sarah made it possible to portray the religiously sensitive issue of a married couple becoming one flesh. Tobias, who was Sarah's eighth groom, was under the protection of the archangel Raphael, since her previous seven husbands had been killed by the demon Asmodeus before they could consummate their marriage. Raphael told Tobias to burn the heart and liver of a fish, the smell of which would drive out the devil. Visscher shows them kneeling in prayer, with the demon in the fireplace in the background on the left, reminding viewers of Tobit's sincere prayer that he might suppress lustful desire and obey God.

There is a very similar depiction of Tobias and Sarah praying in Maarten van Heemskerck's two print series of the *Story of Tobias* (ca. 1548 and 1556) [Figs. 2 and 3]. Visscher must have known those sixteenth-century prints and could have borrowed the couple's pose in order to emphasize the act of prayer. Van Heemskerck's prints and Visscher's illustration all portray the biblical couple praying in front of their nuptial bed, setting a visual example of the importance of piety before consummation. The act of prayer is totally at odds with the classical epithalamists' emphasis on the delights of *lascivia lususque*, which formed the mainspring of conventional Dutch vernacular epithalamia.

Visscher's image of the wedding night would have been chosen for the opportunity it gave to stress the importance of religious rather than physical

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see Thiel P.J.J. van, "Poor Parents, Rich Children and Family Saying Grace", *Simiolus* 17 (1987) 90–149, esp. 128–141; Jongh E. de, "Grape Symbolism in Paintings of the 16th and 17th Centuries", *Simiolus* 7 (1974) 166–180, esp. 189–190; Jongh E. de – Luijten G. (eds.), *Mirror of Everyday life. Genreprints in the Netherlands 1550–1700*, exh. cat., Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam: 1997) 124–128; Luijten – Suchtelen, *Dawn of the Golden Age* 628–629; Franits W., "The Family Saying Grace: A Theme in Dutch Art of the Seventeenth Century", *Simiolus* 16 (1986) 36–49.

22   The anonymous poet, who signed his works with the motto 'Winnen maeckt vreucht' (Winning brings joy), was obviously stressing the devotional nature of the wedding poem, placing God's instruction at the heart of it: 'The chastity that exists in the chaste mind, I believe,/ Be it in or outside Marriage, the pious is already pure./ Blessed by the Lord by the marital state,/ God wishes that man will spread his seed here' ('De kuyscheyt die bestaet int kuysch gemoedt, ick meyn,/ 'T zy in oft uyt de Echt, den vromen ist al reyn./ Door d'Houwelycken staet gesegent van den Heere,/ Wil Gode dat den mensch syn zaet hier sal vermeeren.'). *Bruylofts-dichten, Rombovt Iacobsen de ionghe ende Hillegonda van Baesdorp* (Amsterdam, Paulus van Ravensteyn: 1616) fol. A2v.

FIGURE 9.2   After Maarten van Heemskerck, "The Wedding Night of Tobias and Sarah", from
the *Story of Tobias* (ca. 1550). Woodcut, 19 × 24.2 cm. London, The British Museum
© TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

FIGURE 9.3   After Maarten van Heemskerck, "The Wedding Night of Tobias and Sarah", from
the *Story of Tobias* (1556). Engraving, 24.6 × 20 cm. London, The British Museum
© TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

consummation, with the accompanying illustrations functioning as sermon-
izing images, and their influence is very apparent in later paintings by Nicolaes
Knupfer and Jan Steen, in which the couple are also kneeling by their bed
before retiring.[23] [Fig. 9.4] The object was to stress the intensely religious rit-
ual of the wedding night, as illustrated by the bride and groom's prayer, which
marked the start of their devotional life together. Jan Steen's painting was cut
into two parts, why or by whom is not known, but the praying couple were
clearly seen as a distinct and separate motif, and may have been removed so as
to isolate and stress the importance of couples praying at their marriage bed.[24]

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23   Two versions of the *Wedding Night of Tobias and Sarah* are included in the monograph:
Saxton J., *Nicolaus Knupfer. An Original Artist* (Doornspijk: 2005) 113–115.
24   Westermann M., *The Amusement of Jan Steen* (Zwolle: 1997) 54.

FIGURE 9.4 Jan Steen, "The Wedding Night of Tobias and Sarah" (ca. 1660). Oil on canvas,
           81 × 123 cm. The Hague, Museum Bredius

As far as the subject of prayers at the nuptial bed is concerned, the wedding
night of Tobias and Sarah is very reminiscent of Roman Catholic marital cul-
ture. The nights of Tobias – a period of sexual abstinence – were recommended
by Catholic preachers to strengthen the spiritual affinity of the couple before
nuptial intercourse. Newly-weds were counselled, out of respect for the nup-
tial blessing, to defer consummation for three nights, or at least until after the
wedding night, devoting themselves to prayer instead.[25] This ecclesiastical rite
that flourished in the Middle Ages would not have been a favoured topic for
Reformed churches. For a start, Luther did not turn Tobias's abstinence into a
general rule, with the result that the episode of the story of Tobias disappeared
from Lutheran preaching.[26] By contrast, he used other biblical examples in
preaching about weddings, such as Isaac and Rebecca, David and Abigail, and
Ahasuerus and Esther. However, the wedding night of Tobias and Sarah was
still emphasized by the Catholic priest and Limburg writer Franciscus Agricola

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25   Hall E., *The Arnolfini Betrothal. Medieval Marriage and the Enigma of Van Eyck's Double
     Portrait* (Berkeley: 1994) 23.
26   Brown C.B., "The Reformation of Marriage in Lutheran Wedding-Preaching", *Seminary
     Ridge Review* 15, 2 (2013) 1–25, esp. 16.

(ca. 1545/50–1620), who was still placing Tobias and Sarah at the core of Catholic nuptial advice in the early seventeenth century in order to highlight marriage as the sacrament of holy matrimony.[27] It is clear, though, that the revival of the episode was more related to the function of the wedding booklet. By showing the bridal prayers, the proper use of the wedding booklet was limited to a devotional purpose, unlike classical epithalamia.

The use of the subject of Tobias and Sarah was therefore a poetic device that invited emulation and promoted the honourable joy of the married state in the chaste marriage bed. The main concern of seventeenth-century Dutch religious epithalamists was to make Christ the witness of the marriage (Wedding at Cana) and to instruct the bridal couple that Christ is the only sponsor of a chaste Christian marriage, and that therefore the couple must offer up a preparatory prayer before consummating their union. The arousal of inner, more refined feelings about the wedding night in the context of prayer and meditation on biblical precepts was the important point in early seventeenth-century Dutch epithalamia, and the scene of the prayers before the nuptial bed is thus a symbolic and essential rite for the bridal couple.[28]

2   Propriety on the Wedding Night

Other Dutch religious writers, including epithalamists, highlighted the importance of the way newly-weds entered into their devotional life together. The code of conduct for wedding nights was also expounded in Dutch literature, such as moralistic emblem books, in which instructions on how to prepare for the devotional wedding night are conveyed through words and images, much like illustrated epithalamia. For instance, in his *Emblemata of sinne-werck* of 1624, the Zeeland author Johan de Brune (1588–1658) foregrounded the

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27   Agricola Franciscus, *Biblischer Ehespiegel. In Siben Catholischen Ehe- oder Braut-Predigen verfasset* (Cologne, Bernhard Woter: 1599) 75–76; Dressen-Coenders L., *Het verbond van heks en duivel. Een waandenkbeeld aan het begin van de moderne tijd als symptoom van een veranderende situatie van de vrouw en als middel tot hervorming der zeden* (Baarn: 1983) 176–177.

28   The virtue of having a pious wedding night had already been emphasized by Erasmus in his *Christiani Matrimonii Institutio* of 1526: 'Let us make Christ the witness and sponsor of Christian marriage, so that no impurity may soil relations with a spouse; let the husband persuade his wife, through God's decrees and laws, to do willingly and joyfully what she has learned is pleasing to the Lord. Let both partners first pray to him in unison to bestow his favour on their marriage; after prayer, let them engage in pious conversation. Finally, let their lovemaking be modest and virtuous, the opposite of fornication and rape'. English translation from Rummel E., *Erasmus on Women* (Toronto: 1996) 101.

importance of piety and lifelong marital devotion that should start from the bridal couple's first night together.[29] The *pictura* of an emblem entitled 'Het Houw'licks bed zy onbesmet' ('Let the marital bed be unsullied') illustrates a familiar contemporary setting, unlike Visscher's biblical adoption of the kneeling Tobias and Sarah. [Fig. 9.5] The *picturae* for this emblem book were designed by Adriaen van de Venne (1589–1662), who wrote a versified description of how his illustrations function in his *Zeeusche Mey-clacht*: 'All that a great poet knows how to bring forth, / All that is unseen that a great mind can see, / The art of painting shows as if it really happened'.[30] The addition of such visual reality to strengthen the verbal message is the key to the *Emblemata*, creating a fresh channel of visual communication to the readers.[31]

In the emblem picture, a fully dressed bride holding a pomander is seated next to the nuptial bed, its pillows adorned with the couple's crowns and the floor strewn with flowers. The four women standing beside her are about to retire for the night, establishing that the scene is set just before the departure for the nuptial bed, when the women would be advising the bride on how to conduct herself on this important night. The old lady, for example, gives the bride a good talking-to about the night, which fits the content of the *subscriptio*:

> When you, bound two-in-one by wedlock's bond,
> In that which leads your fiery heart to sacred water,
> Before savouring the fruit of marriage
> Vow to yourself chastity eternal.
> No trough of foul lust is the marital bed,
> But there, those who use it in a seemly manner shall remain maidenly.
> When, both bedecked with an honourable blush, you go to take your
>   rest there,
> Be sure, both together, to commit no impropriety.[32]

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29 Porteman K., "Johan de Brunes emblematische essays", in Verkruijsse P.J. (ed.), *Johan de Brune de Oude (1588–1658). Een Zeeuws literator en staatsman uit de zeventiende eeuw* (Middelburg: 1990) 108–119; Kolfin E., *The Young Gentry at Play. Northern Netherlandish Scenes of Merry Companies 1610–1645* (Leiden: 2005) 232–234.

30 Venne Adriaen van de, *Zeeusche Nachtegael* (Middelburg, Jan van de Venne: 1623) 64: 'Al wat een Cunst-Poët te voorschyn weet te halen,/ Al wat een groot verstant onsienelicken siet,/ Dat thoont de Schilder-const al offet waer geshiet'.

31 See further on Adriaen van de Venne as illustrator, Bol L.J., *Adriaen Pietersz. van de Venne. Painter and Draughtsman* (Doornspijk: 1989) 112–127.

32 Brune Johan de, *Emblemata of Zinne-werck* (Amsterdam, Jan Evertsen Kloppenburch: 1624) 9: 'Als ghy, twee-eenigh, zijt, door echten band, gesloten/ In 't geen uw brandigh hert tot heyligh water leyd,/ Al-eer ghy noch de vrucht des houw'licks hebt genoten,/ Doe by u zelf beloft van eeuwigh eerbaerheyd./ Het houw'licks bed en is geen goot' van vuyle

EMBLEMATA
II.
Het Houw'licks bed zy onbesmet.

Als ghy, twee-eenigh, zijt, door echten band, gesloten
    In 't geen uw brandigh hert tot heyligh water leyd,
Al-eer ghy noch de vrucht des houw'licks hebt genoten,
    Doe by u zelf beloft van eeuwigh eerbaerheyd.
Het houw'licks bed en is geen goot' van vuyle lusten,
    Maer daer, die 't wel gebruyckt, elck een in maegh-
    dom blijft.
Als ghy dan, beyd' bedeckt met eerbaer root, gaet rusten,
    Zie dat ghy dan te zaem geen over-spel bedrijft.

B   Wt-

FIGURE 9.5 Adriaen van de Venne, engraving in Johan de Brune, *Emblemata of Zinne-werck*
(Amsterdam, Jan Evertsen Kloppenburch: 1624), "Het Houw'licks bed zy
onbesmet" 9. The Hague, National Library of the Netherlands.

Emblems of this kind are thus closely related to epithalamia in their insistence on seemliness and the purity of the nuptial bed, as if echoing the line from Tobit 8:7: 'O Lord, I take not this my sister for lust but uprightly'. Dutch writers accordingly put Christian piety above merry verses when commemorating the wedding night, and the theme of the marriage bed was not a topos for *lascivia lususque*, which was the main concept of traditional epithalamia, but a medium for providing the bridal couple with spiritual guidance. It can be said, then, that a certain restraint was exercised when dealing with nuptial topics, stressing the pure and honourable bond between a man and a woman, which had its parallel in the devout approach adopted in Dutch epithalamia.

The extremely popular publication of 1625 entitled *Houwelick*, by Jacob Cats (1577–1660), a famous seventeenth-century poet and moralist, and the advocate of Christian marriage, also focused very firmly on providing maidens with moral instructions on how to prepare for marriage.[33] First and foremost, the chapter titled 'Bruyt' (Bride) highlights how respectable Protestants wished newly-weds the joys of a chaste Christian marriage and advocated the creation of a devotional atmosphere before becoming one flesh. Cats's instructions about the wedding day cover various topics, such as the behaviour of the wedding guests, the bride and groom's mental preparation, orchestrating the mood of the wedding banquet, the symbolic meaning of the bride's crown, conduct at the nuptial bed, and pious conversation between bride and groom.[34] There were also taboos like drinking too much wine, jolly entertainments, and any kind of disruption that would disturb reverent minds; for example, on the jostling of wedding guests when the bride retires to the nuptial bed, Cats writes: 'That here no wanton moppet may create turmoil or speak impudently at the door. No gamester, no clamour, no song shall hinder the bride and her attendants as she prays within'.[35] Reciting frivolous or voluptuous epithalamic verses before the couple retired to their nuptial chamber would therefore have been considered utterly inappropriate due to their filthy language and slyly lewd allusions. By the same token, the images that accompanied

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lusten,/ Maer daer, die 't wel gebruyckt, elck een in maeghdom blijft./ Als ghy dan, beyd' bedeckt met eerbaer root, gaet rusten,/ Zie dat ghy dan te zaem geen over-spel bedrijft'.

33   Franits W., *Paragons of Virtue. Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (Cambridge – New York: 1993) 5–9, 67–68.

34   Cats Jacob, *Houwelick* (Middelburg, Jan van de Venne: 1625), the third part "Bruyt" fols. 29v–33v.

35   Cats, *Houwelick*, the third part "Bruyt" fol. 32v: 'Dat hier geen dertel wicht, met onbeschofte streken,/ En maecke voor de deur te tieren, of te spreken;/ Geen speelman, geen geroup, geen sang en doe belet;/ De bruyt, en haer ghevolch, doet binnen haer gebet'.

the nuptial verses had to befit this standard, arousing only pious affection for the couple's future.

Cats's propaganda on the characteristics, virtues and duties of a Dutch burgher household on its bedrock of piety was succeeded in a later publication, Petrus Wittewrongel's *Oeconomia Christiana ofte Christelicke huyshoudinghe* (Christian Domestic Economy, or The Christian Household).[36] Like Cats's warning against secular and lustful entertainment on the wedding day, Wittewrongel stresses that the virtuous bridal couple should set up their wedding night in spiritual terms as follows: 'The marital bed must in no way be befouled by carnal excesses, licentious unchaste discourses, impure and salacious licentiousness; the marital bed must quench the lusts, not inflame them'.[37] Visscher's depiction eliminated any suggestion of lust or physical intimacy, and in this he was followed by De Brune, Cats and Wittewrongel, all of whom insisted that the marriage bed was not an excuse for *lascivia lususque*, but was to be used solely for devout consummation.

3   Cautionary Images from Cats's Emblem Book

As can be seen from the Dutch religious authors' determined attempts to protect the nuptial bed from voluptuous amusement and to keep it honourable and chaste, their attitude was fervent in the extreme and went far beyond merely controlling the level of erotic jokes with the epithalamists' safety valve. The words and images of Dutch epithalamia could aid contemplation of the pious rite of marriage, not only for the bridal couple but for their guests as well.[38] A fine example of this puristic Protestant attitude is found in the ephemeral booklet of 1637 for the wedding of Samuel Hespel, a gold thread drawer of Amsterdam, and Clara van Belle. The epithalamium was written by Pieter van Belle, the bride's elder brother. He was a baker and amateur poet who mainly composed religious sonnets and occasional poetry for his relatives' weddings and funerals, showing that he, at least, was keen on perpetuating a family tradition.

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36   Franits, *Paragons* 109.

37   Wittewrongel Petrus, *Oeconomia Christiana ofte Christelicke huyshoudinghe* (Amsterdam, voor de weduwe van Marten Jansz Brant en Abraham van den Burgh: 1655) vol. 1, 142: 'Het Houwelicks-bedde, en behoort geensins/ door vleeschelicke excessen, lichtveerdige onkuysche redenen, onreyne ende geyle lichtveerdigheden verontreynight te worden; het Houwelicks bedde moet de lusten uyt-blusschen, niet ontsteecken'.

38   Kolfin, *Young Gentry* 229–235.

FIGURE 9.6   (Left) Anonymous, frontispiece of Pieter van Belle, *Bruylofts ghedicht en ghelvck-vvenschinge over het soet versamen van* [...]. *Samvel Hespel* [...] *Clara van Belle* (Rotterdam, Pieter van Waesberge: 1637). The Hague, National Library of the Netherlands
(Right) Adriaen van de Venne, engraving in Jacob Cats, *Self-Stryt* (Middelburg, Jan van de Venne: 1620) 50. The Hague, National Library of the Netherlands

The booklet was an amalgam of personal messages to the bridal couple in the form of poems, and an anonymous artist's copies of well-known illustrations from two of Jacob Cats's books adapted to suit the purpose of a wedding booklet. They are the frontispiece from *Self-Stryt* of 1620 [Fig. 9.6], and six emblems from the illustrations of *Proteus ofte Minne-beelden*, which was originally designed by Adriaen van de Venne and issued by the same publisher as the 1637 booklet [Figs. 9.7 and 9.8]. The publisher provides one of the clues as to why these images were attached to the booklet. He was Pieter van Waesberge, who had published Zacharias Heyns's *Emblemata: Emblems Chrestienes et Morales, Sinne-Beelden enz.* in 1625, and in 1627 issued Cats's *Proteus ofte Minne-beelden*.[39] It is true that the *picturae* for the emblems in the latter publication are not identical to the illustrations in the wedding booklet, but the anonymous artist hired by Van Waesberge obviously copied directly

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39   Ledeboer A., *Het geslacht van Waesberghe. Eene bijdrage tot de geschiedenis der boekdrukkunst en van den boekhandel in Nederland* (The Hague: 1859) 80–81.

FIGURE 9.7 (a)–(f) Anonymous, six engravings in Pieter van Belle, *Bruylofts ghedicht en ghelvck-vvenschinge over het soet versamen van* [...]. *Samvel Hespel* [...] *Clara van Belle* (Rotterdam, Pieter van Waesberge: 1637) A4v–A6r. The Hague, National Library of the Netherlands

FIGURE 9.8 After Adriaen van de Venne, six emblem *picturae* in Jacob Cats, *Sinne- en Minnebeelden* (Rotterdam, Pieter van Waesberge: 1627). (a) "Iam plenis nubilis annis. [45]" 226; (b) "Post tristia dulcor. [38]" 224; (c) "Nemo dolens patet libidini. [51]" 302; (d) "Turpe senilis amor. [33]" 194; (e) "Qui captat, capitur. [25]" 146; (f) "Quod iuvat exiguum est. [19]" 110. The Hague, National Library of the Netherlands

from them in order to adapt the meaning of the images for the purpose of the nuptial ephemera at the family banquet.

The title page stands in stark contrast to the six emblematic illustrations in that it depicts the bad example of light-hearted festivities and very physical pleasures, whereas the contents of the booklet, both verbal and visual, are very pious and edifying. Cats's *Self-Stryt* deals with the age-old inner struggle between the flesh and the spirit, similar to the homily in his later work, the *Houwelick*, in which he declares that newly married couples should devote their wedding night to being pious and devout. One might doubt that the title page has religious connotations, since it appears to depict merely a jolly theatrical scene peopled by allegorical figures. As Kolfin has pointed out, Van de Venne's illustration is a classic merry company scene portraying 'the marriage of Youth and Joy' in the centre.[40] On the left, the activities of eating, drinking, making music and dancing are symbolized by the woman eating an apple, the seated woman with the songbook, the dancing woman with a wineglass, and the masked lutenist. On the right, a merry jester is dancing beside a man standing by a horse, while a dog jumps up at him. The reason for linking this satirical image to a wedding booklet was not to evoke the festive mood of a wedding day along the lines of a theatrical interlude, but to show the other side of the coin, namely how these negative adjuncts of a wedding day should be avoided, just as Cats warned against impious and imprudent behaviour at the feast.

This is exactly the same as the original intention of adding illustrations to the edifying texts, as can be seen from the preface of Cats's *Silenus Alcibiades, sive Proteus*: 'They are mute but nevertheless speaking images, pretty affairs, and yet not without weight, / ridiculous things though not without wisdom:/ Into which (I say) one generally always reads/ more than there is: and thinks still more than one sees'.[41] Cats's emblem book differed from other Petrarchan amorous love emblems, since didactic and religious teachings about Christian virtues like humility, cautiousness, moderation, wisdom, and steadfastness, were upheld as essential.[42] His readers were reminded of the transience of

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40 Kolfin, *Young Gentry* 217.

41 Cats Jacob, *Silenus Alcibiades, sive Proteus* (Middelburg, Hans van der Hellen: 1618) fols. 2r–2v: 'dattet zyn stomme beelden, ende nochtans sprekende: gheringhe saken, ende niet-te-min van gewichte: belachelycke dinghen, ende nochtans niet sonder wijsheyt: In de welcke men de goede zeden als met vinghers wysen, ende met handen tasten can, in de welcke (seg ick) men gemeenlyck altyt meer leest, alsser staet: ende noch meer denckt, alsmen siet'.

42 Cats Jacob, *Sinne- en Minnebeelden*, ed. H. Luijten, 3 vols. (The Hague: 1996) vol. 2, 79–82; Kolfin, *Young Gentry* 229–232.

human life, and invited to enhance their godly spirituality through word and image. So Cats's claim about the power of thinking 'still more than one sees' can be found in the verbal and visual messages that help to strengthen the reader's belief, and to guide the value of love between man and woman towards honourable Christian love, with its aversion to worldly enjoyments and sin.

It is noteworthy that the 1637 booklet adopted these didactic complementary images. The private booklet adorned with Cats's didactic emblem would have been an exclusive sign that the marriage of Van Belle and Hespel was legitimized by the zealous Protestant manner of observing the moderation of the spiritual wedding ceremony. It is also an example that shows how didactic emblems like those of Cats impacted on the use of images in Dutch epithalamic booklets, demonstrating that the images had to reflect the Protestant value of a moderate and God-fearing married life.

This particular combination of word and image would have been familiar to the bridal couple and their guests because the images were borrowed from a best-selling emblem book, and the vernacular text is plain and simple, and does not contain any names of mythological figures or intellectual allegories. The images are not directly mentioned in the text, which was written not for the bridal couple but for the bride's mother, and is titled 'An address to the mother'. The poem details a mother's emotions on seeing her children embark on married life, society's essential cornerstone, and preparation for the end of their lives. The text conforms to Cats's warning that an appropriate Calvinist wedding feast should have neither song nor entertainment, but only faithful prayers for the future of the married couple, as the poem ends with the words: 'God wishes to praise the couple, / God who wishes to gladden them both/ Down here on earth, / And attend them with his spirit/ And also crown them in the hereafter/ When his son reveals him'.[43]

Correspondingly, the images prompt the viewers to find the deeper meaning of the instructive messages. The first image is related to a mother's worry that her daughter might be led astray by a silver-tongued rogue and her overriding concern that she choose a suitable partner, accompanied by the image of two trees grafted together and the motto 'Of two one, of one two'.[44] This is followed by 'Sweeter after sadness', with a woman and her rejected suitor seated in front

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43   Belle Pieter van, *Bruylofts ghedicht en ghelvck-vvenschinge over het soet versamen van* […]. *Samvel Hespel* […] *Clara van Belle* (Rotterdam, Pieter van Waesberge: 1637) A6r: 'Godt wil 't Paer ghebenedyden/ God die wilse bey verblyden/ Hier beneden op der aerdt./ Met sijn Geest haer oock by-woonen/ En hier namaels oock bekroonen/ Als sijn Soon hem openbaerdt'.

44   Cats, *Sinne- en minnebeelden* 266–271: *Iam plenis nubilis annis* [45].

of a curtained bed, highlighting the importance of prudence and watchfulness before indulging in physical pleasure.[45] The next, rather gruesome scene of a rotting corpse is titled 'Nobody would suffer longer from lust', and is a *memento mori* that would have put the dampers on merrymaking at the wedding breakfast, with its reference to Cupid's use of the body's fat as a source of oil for his torch.[46] This image sent a fervent message to the readers that spirituality and piety are the only virtuous way of life for a sincere Christian, by showing the consequences for the dead body and the nothingness of pursuing fleshly desire. The garden scene with flowers without bees conveyed the message that it was disgraceful for an old man to fall in love.[47] The emblem of a seagull with its beak trapped shut by an oyster, with the motto 'Who expects to catch is often caught', shows the importance of being watchful and behaving cautiously, with faith and wisdom.[48] The final one, with garlanded oxen heading for slaughter, proclaims that 'Pleasure is fleeting', urging the guests to be mindful of moderation and godliness, and to never forget that in life we are surrounded by death.[49]

If the entire programme of the 1637 wedding banquet followed the model of Pieter van Belle's epithalamium one imagines that it must have been a very solemn and edifying wedding day, with more than a hint of *memento mori* about it. The illustrations borrowed from the emblems of the moralist Cats would have served to prepare the mood for a restrained and pious wedding night far removed from the earthy exhortations and glorification of carnal love that typified traditional epithalamia.

The rise and spread of Dutch illustrated epithalamia in the first half of the seventeenth century demonstrates how a literary tradition bowed to the demands of a newly minted Calvinist ethic, and how illustrations accompanying occasional poems underpinned the essential nature of religious marital virtues for Dutch readers, placing all the emphasis on piety, modesty, chastity and restraint on the wedding night. The texts and images of the booklets had been used to tone down the voluptuous mood of nuptial entertainments even before the arrival of bestsellers in the genres of didactic emblem books and conduct books that reflected Calvinist teaching about marital virtues, as can be seen from Cats's publications. This phenomenon tells us that the seventeenth-century Dutch reception of the epithalamic genre was

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45   Ibid. 224–229: *Post tristia dulcor* [38].
46   Ibid. 302–307: *Nemo dolens patet libidini* [51].
47   Ibid. 194–199: *Turpe senilis amor* [33].
48   Ibid. 146–151: *Qui captat, capitur* [25].
49   Ibid. 110–115: *Quod iuvat exiguum est* [19].

positive when it shifted its focus by urging the bridal couple to observe an intensely religious ritual on the wedding night that entailed meditation and prayer in preparation for their joint devotional life together. In that sense, the illustrated epithalamic booklets were no longer ephemera lauding worldly pleasure and festivities, but had the far more serious task of sealing the marital bond with pious pledges.

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PART 4

The Materiality of Devotion

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Amulets and the Material Interface of Beliefs in Seventeenth-Century Prague Burgher Homes

Suzanna Ivanič

This chapter shows how amulets were part of a broad arsenal of religious objects that helped early modern men and women negotiate the divine in daily life. The emphasis here is on understanding amulets specifically as 'religious' objects, and as artefacts that acted as a material interface between religion, medicine and 'folk' belief. Research has shown that from the perspective of the early modern laity stark divisions between religion and magic or superstition were largely absent from daily life.[1] Spells have been found bound into French religious prayer books, for example, and 'popular' healing rituals in southern Italy incorporated prayers and invocations.[2] This chapter builds on these earlier studies to explore how small amulets kept at home and used in everyday contexts reveal that these were not just discrete beliefs held simultaneously, but deeply interconnected ones. This material perspective can help recalibrate our understanding of the spiritual world of early modern men and women, and cast light onto a lived belief system that often slips from the textual record.

Amulets were exceptionally popular items owned by men and women of all social strata in early modern Europe. However, so far they have only been treated as marginal to history. They form side notes to studies of magic, superstition or enchantment.[3] They are referred to in specialist works on so-called 'magical

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1 Geertz H., "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, I", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (1975) 71–89 and Thomas K., "An Anthropology of Religion and Magic, II", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 6 (1975) 91–109; Tambiah S., *Magic, Science, Religion, and the Scope of Rationality* (Cambridge: 1990) 23, 31; Kieckhefer R., "The Specific Rationality of Medieval Magic", *The American Historical Review* 99, 3 (1994) 813–836: 836; Clark S., *Thinking with Demons: The Idea of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe* (Oxford: 1997) 458.

2 Reinburg V., *French Books of Hours: Making an Archive of Prayer, c.1400–1600* (Cambridge: 2011) 133–135; Gentilcore D., *From Bishop to Witch: The System of the Sacred in Early Modern Terra d'Otranto* (Manchester: 1992) 131, 177.

3 Thomas K., *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London: 1979 [1971]) 224–225; Cameron E., *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion, 1250–1750* (Oxford: 2010) 51–52.

jewels' that focus on the use of precious stones in healing and folklore.[4] In largest number, they are featured in museum catalogues or studies of jewellery.[5] The most comprehensive volume dedicated to amulets, *Amulett und Talisman: Erscheinungsform und Geschichte* [Amulet and Talisman: Manifestation and History], was published in 1966 by the German folklorists Liselotte Hansmann and Lenz Kriss-Rettenbeck.[6] This work catalogued hundreds of objects and images relating to amulets and talismans from antiquity to the nineteenth century, focusing on examples from the early modern period. In doing so, it revealed how the early modern period was an exceptional age for amulets. Categorizing these artefacts into those made from stones, organic matter and animal parts and those fashioned into specific symbols or signs, the work set them firmly within the context of alchemy and magic. Overall, the existing literature has treated amulets as belonging to the realm of the superstitious, folkloric or magical. Their importance to understanding lived religion has, however, been neglected.

To examine how amulets fitted into a belief system in this period, this research focuses on seventeenth-century Prague. This central European city presents the ideal environment for such a study. Firstly, over the course of a century, the population transformed from primarily Protestant to overwhelmingly Catholic owing to recatholicization led by Habsburg rulers from 1620.[7] It thus allows for confessional nuances to be taken into account. Secondly, from 1577 to 1612, Prague was the seat of the Holy Roman Empire under the Habsburg

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4   Evans J., *Magical Jewels of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, particularly in England* (Oxford: 1922); Thorndike L., *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* (New York: 1923–58); Trachtenberg J., *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (Philadelphia: 2004 [1939]) 132–152; Cherry J., "Healing through Faith: The Continuation of Medieval Attitudes to Jewellery into the Renaissance", *Renaissance Studies* 15, 2 (2001) 154–171; Blaen T., *Medical Jewels, Magical Gems: Precious Stones in Early Modern Britain: Society, Culture and Belief* (Crediton: 2012).

5   Kunz G., *The Magic of Jewels and Charms* (London: 1915); Kunz G., *Rings for the Finger* (Philadelphia: 1917); Kunz G., *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones* (London: 1918); Oman C., *Victoria and Albert Museum Catalogue of Rings 1930* (Ipswich: 1993); Ettlinger E., "British Amulets in London Museums", *Folklore* 50, 2 (1939) 148–175; *Das Amulett. Die Magie des Schmucks* (*Kataloge des Museums- und Kulturvereins Schloss Albeck Nr. 1*) (Sirnitz: 1994); Tait H. (ed.), *Seven Thousand Years of Jewellery* (London: 1986); Lightbown R.W., *Mediaeval European Jewellery* (London: 1992); Scarisbrick D., *Rings: Symbols of Wealth Power and Affection* (New York: 1993); Scarisbrick D., *Tudor and Jacobean Jewellery* (London: 1995); Scarisbrick D., *Rings: Jewelry of Power, Love and Loyalty* (London: 2007).

6   Hansmann L. – Kriss-Rettenbeck L., *Amulett und Talisman. Erscheinungsform und Geschichte* (Munich: 1966).

7   See further, Louthan H., *Converting Bohemia: Force and Persuasion in the Catholic Reformation* (Cambridge: 2009).

Rudolf II (1552–1612). In Prague, Rudolf cultivated a court environment famed for hosting natural philosophers, alchemists and 'magicians', including John Dee, Edward Kelley, Michael Maier, and, briefly, Giordano Bruno.[8] Prague became a city imbued with a fascination for transforming materials and gaining access to natural powers.

To investigate the use of amulets in daily life in early modern Prague, this research examines evidence from inventories across the century, alongside extant objects, and treatises on natural philosophy.[9] The first part of the chapter shows how amulets were used and perceived in relation to standard devotional objects, such as prayer beads, crucifixes and *Agnus Dei*, in the context of the Prague inventories. It reveals how Protestants and Catholics participated in shared practices involving amulets to negotiate divine power in their daily lives. The second part of this chapter focuses on natural philosophy and the materiality of amulets made from stone or animal matter to establish how amulets fitted into a 'unified system' or cosmology in which God had ultimate power over the workings of the world. It argues that the widespread use of amulets by Prague burghers shows that men and women of all social strata engaged in an early modern worldview in which the natural world was infused with divine power.

1   Amulets and Devotional Objects

Items such as heart-shaped crystal pendants, stones and animal teeth set in silver appear in the inventories of early modern men and women in Prague. They belonged not only to the urban elite but also to artisans and burghers of modest wealth. Even more frequently, 'amuletic' materials like gems as well as coconut shell and horn were integrated into jewellery or devotional objects such as prayer beads or crucifixes. In spite of substantial evidence for the possession of amulets and amuletic materials, there is no mention of the word 'amulet' or 'charm' in the Prague inventories.[10] These tiny and often inconspicuous items

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8   Evans R.J.W., *Rudolf II and his world: a study in intellectual history, 1576–1612* (Oxford: 1973) 196–242.

9   I use evidence from a sample of 168 inventories from Prague taken at intervals of five years between 1600 and 1700, which I have analysed as part of a wider project to examine religious materiality: Ivanič S., *Religious Materiality in Seventeenth-Century Prague,* Ph.D. dissertation (University of Cambridge: 2015).

10   On this point and its significance, as well as further examination of what might be considered an 'amulet', see Ivanič S., "Amulets: A Material Clue to the History of Lived Religion", *V&A Online Journal* (forthcoming); further comparative research would be fruitful here:

that were kept safely in jewellery boxes, cupboards and chests of clothes were used for a matter of utmost importance: they provided a means for their own-ers to negotiate the exigencies of daily life. Amulets and amuletic materials were employed for healing and protection against physical and psychological dangers.

Evidence in the Prague inventories suggests that amulets and amuletic ma-terials were part of a wide spectrum of items, not limited to devotional objects, that could be used to interact with the divine. They were often kept alongside or integrated with what might be called more traditional 'religious' items.[11] For example, the 1635 inventory of Kúndrat Šteffenaúr, a court clockmaker origi-nally from Switzerland, noted how he kept 'two silver crosses' and 'two pieces of ivory hand set in silver' in a chest.[12] This entry for 'ivory hand' related to small charms made out of ivory that were carved into particular hand ges-tures. A simple extant example of such an object is held in the British Museum [Fig. 10.1]. The gesture made manifest in this case is the *mano figa* – a closed fist with the thumb clasped between the index and middle fingers – that was com-monly employed to ward off the evil eye and to protect fertility.[13] There was no attempt to hide amulets from the official scribe during the process of making the inventory, indicating that these items were likely to have been considered legally acceptable possessions across the period in spite of their association with superstition at the ecclesiastical level.[14] Even at the end of the century, in

Italian inventories of a similar period, for example, also do not use any such word to de-note amulets (with thanks to Irene Galandra for this observation).

11   For discussion of what a 'religious object' is, see Ivanič S., "Early modern religious objects and materialities of belief", in Richardson C. – Hamling T. – Gaimster D. (eds.), *Routledge Handbook of Material Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Abingdon: 2016) 322–337, here 333–334.

12   Kúndrat Šteffenaúr (New Town, 1635), Archiv hlavního města Prahy (AHMP) Sbírka rukopisů, rkp. č.1214, fol. 199v.

13   Kemnitz E.-M. von, "Porous Frontiers of the Hand Symbol", in Silva Tavim J.A. – Lopes de Barros M.F. – Lubia Mucznik L. (eds.), *In the Iberian Peninsula and Beyond: A History of Jews and Muslims (15th–17th Centuries)* vol. 2 (Newcastle: 2015) 258–70; Hansmann – Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulett und Talisman* 192–207; Hildburgh W., "Notes on some Contemporary Portuguese Amulets", *Folklore* 19, 2 (1908) 213–24.

14   Further research is needed to understand to what extent 'amulets' were condemned by ecclesiastical authorities in Prague in this period. Two treatises written by Jesuits in the late seventeenth century include passages against talismans, but it is unclear to what extent this message reached the laity or led to eradicating amulets from lay posses-sions; see Šteyer Matěj, *Postylla katolická na dvě částky rozdělená nedělní i sváteční, aneb Vejkladové na evangelia* [*Catholic postil in two parts regarding Sundays and Holy Days, and a commentary on the Gospels*] (Prague, Universitatis Carolo-Ferdinandeae: 1691) and Chanovský Albrecht, *Správa křesťanská s krátkým výkladem podstatnějších věcí* [*Christian administration with a short explanation of the most essential things*] (Prague, Universitatis

FIGURE 10.1   Ivory hand amulet (seventeenth to eighteenth centuries). Ivory, silver, 38 mm. British Museum (2003,0331.9)

1680, Lydmilla Scoliasterová owned a 'tooth in a silver setting' as well as bibles, Alžběta Humplová owned a wolf's tooth on a necklace and an engraving of the Virgin Mary, and the wig-maker Martin Klockhon owned a wolf's tooth in silver setting along with crucifixes and medals with Christ's image.[15] In 1700, amongst numerous Catholic devotional items including religious pictures, books, crucifixes, a reliquary and an altar, Veronika Dirixová owned a 'snake tongue in silver setting' and a 'wolf's tooth in a similar setting' amongst her jewellery.[16] 'Snake's tongues' – which were in fact fossilized sharks' teeth – had been used since the medieval period for detecting poison.[17] Inventorial information alone does not explicitly reveal how amulets were treated by their owners, but it does show

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Carolo-Ferdinandeae: 1676). See analysis in Mikulec J., "Pověra mezi barokem a osvícenstvím: Zvonění na mraky jako ochranná praktika I zavrženíhodný nešvar", *Folia Historica Bohemica* 28, 2 (2013) 259–77.

15   Lydmilla Scoliasterová (New Town, 1680), AHMP 1195, fol. 240v; Alžběta Humplová (Old Town, 1679/80), AHMP 1177, fol. 606v; Martin Klockhon (Old Town, 1680), AHMP 1178, fol. 219v.

16   Veronika Dirixová (Old Town, 1700), AHMP 1179, fol. 394v.

17   Lightbown, *Mediaeval European Jewellery* 237.

that in numerous instances they were kept in close proximity to devotional objects, and thus indicates at the very least that there was little discomfort with the intimate association among these varied items.

Amuletic materials were also integrally combined with devotional objects. Inventories from both ends of the century reveal that Prague burghers owned prayer beads that were made from amuletic materials. In 1600 Mandelena Hvězdová owned a paternoster made of horn, which may have been meant to draw on the healing properties of the material that were thought to counteract poison. Alongside her numerous Catholic objects in 1700, Veronika Dirixová also owned rosary beads that were made of coconut shell, which was another material that was believed to protect against poison.[18] These inventories reveal how prayer beads could be made out of materials that allowed the owner to draw simultaneously on the material's apotropaic qualities whilst praying. This practice has been noted in the Italian context, where amber and coral beads were regularly noted in inventories, were depicted in paintings, and also survive as extant examples in museums.[19] The Prague inventories have so far revealed that – where any material is described – silver was the most common material from which prayer beads were made, followed by so-called 'black' beads (possibly made of painted or varnished wood). However, the occasional references to potentially powerful materials, such as amber and coral and singular mentions of horn and coconut shell, as above, are significant. In such items, the amuletic power was tied inextricably, and materially, to the devotional object.

A number of further examples also reveal that prayer beads might be strung together with charm-like objects.[20] Mikulaš Hoffman's inventory from 1600

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18 Mandelena Hvězdová (New Town, 1599/1600), AHMP 1210, fol. 156r; Veronika Dirixová (Old Town, 1700), AHMP 1179, fol. 394v.

19 For the Italian context, see references to rosaries made of different materials in King R., "'The beads with which we pray are made from it': devotional ambers in early modern Italy", in de Boer W. – Göttler C. (eds.), *Religion and the senses in early modern Europe* (Leiden: 2012) 153–176; Galandra I. – Laven M., "The Material Culture of Piety in the Italian Renaissance: Re-touching the Rosary", in Richardson – Hamling – Gaimster (eds.), *Routledge Handbook* 338–353, here 340; This practice was not only limited to prayer beads, see also coral talismans in Renaissance Italy. Musacchio J., "Lambs, Coral, Teeth, and the Intimate Intersection of Religion and Magic in Renaissance Tuscany", in Montgomery S. – Cornelison S. (eds.), *Images, Relics, and Devotional Practices in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (Tempe: 2005) 139–156, here 151. Further research on the difference in materials noted in the Prague inventories may produce interesting results.

20 Also see examples in the German and Italian contexts in *500 Jahre Rosenkranz: 1475 Köln 1975* (Cologne: 1976) 198; Lightbown, *Medieval European Jewellery* 353; Schiedermair W., "Der Rosenkranz als Amulett", in Frei U. – Bühler F. (eds.), *Der Rosenkranz: Andacht, Geschichte, Kunst* (Bern: 2003) 200; Musacchio, "Lambs, Coral, Teeth" 151 fn. 45.

FIGURE 10.2   Tooth amulet (seventeenth century). Tooth, silver, 7 cm. British Museum (OA.1382)

IMAGE © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

noted a paternoster made of 'some silver beads and a tooth of a wolf and two teeth of a lynx'.[21] Few intact paternosters survive from this period in spite of the large numbers of prayer beads attested to in the inventories, particularly around 1600. Many would undoubtedly have been repurposed into beaded jewellery over subsequent years, thus losing their distinctive ordered format that helped the devotee to count out their prayers. However, we can imagine how the wolf's tooth amulet may have been attached through the example of extant items, such as the tooth amulet in the British Museum [Fig. 10.2]. It is a relatively simple item set in silver and thought to be of German origin.[22] The engravings of chevrons and diamond shapes on the metal are plain and quite roughly cut and the item is held together by a metal pin hammered through the tooth. This item could have been threaded onto a set of beads by its simple loop at the top.

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21   Mikuláš Hoffman (Lesser Town, 1600), AHMP 1217, fol. 130r; in 1600 fifteen out of forty paternosters mentioned in the inventories for that year included *groš* or coins that may have been used as lucky charms.

22   See other examples in Hansmann – Kriss-Rettenbeck, *Amulett und Talisman* 102–103.

These practices of using amulets and amuletic matter alongside and integrated with more standard religious objects were shared across confessions. Previous studies have perceived the separation of magic from religion to have been a distinctive feature of Protestantism.[23] However, in the multiconfessional context of Prague in the early seventeenth century, charms and amulets were possessed alongside both Catholic and Protestant texts and objects. Kúndrat the clockmaker owned charms alongside paternoster prayer beads and Lutheran texts. Mikulaš Hoffman's paternoster beads with teeth were kept alongside a Lutheran sermon book. These two examples also reveal a more general phenomenon not only of owning items that mixed the amuletic with standard devotional objects, but also of owning items from both Catholic and Protestant confessions in the early seventeenth century.[24]

Other inventories reveal how tooth amulets were owned across confessions. In the 1610 inventory of Kateřina Kutnaúrová z Alberndorff 'two beavers' teeth set in silver' and an amulet of crystal in a silver setting were kept alongside jewellery that implied her Catholic faith, including a gold medal with a crucifix and a jewel made of gold, table-cut diamonds and rubies depicting the pelican in her piety. The pelican in her piety was a popular image in seventeenth-century Prague. It showed the pelican wounding her breast in order to feed her young and symbolized Christ the Redeemer's sacrifice. On the Protestant side, in 1620 the glassworker Petr Agler possessed 'four old wolves' teeth' along with Lutheran texts.[25] This inventorial evidence crucially reveals that both faiths used amulets to engage divine power.

Such evidence underlines how Protestantism was not a religion devoid of 'magic' in everyday practice. Rather, there were many ways in which Protestants 'held onto' and developed new so-called enchanted practices.[26] In Protestant Germany, a bible might be stored under the pillow to keep the sleeper safe and woodcut images were worn in pouches around the neck to ward off danger. Even objects that were not directly attached to religious texts and images

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23   Primarily represented in Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* 58–89.

24   Kúndrat Šteffenaúr (New Town, 1635), AHMP 1214, fol. 199r, fol. 205r; Mikulaš Hoffman (Lesser Town, 1600), AHMP 1217, fol. 130r. Explored further along with the nuances of the various Protestant faiths in Prague in Ivanič, *Religious Materiality*; on rosary beads, healing and confessional change, see also King R., "The Reformation of the Rosary Bead: Protestantism and the Perpetuation of the Pater Noster", in Ivanič S. – Laven M. – Morrall A. (eds.), *Religious Materiality in the Early Modern World* (Amsterdam: forthcoming).

25   Kateřina Kutnaúrová z Alberndorff (Lesser Town, 1610/15), AHMP 2135, fol. A5r; Petr Agler (Old Town, 1620), AHMP 1175, fol. 179r.

26   Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*; Clark, *Thinking with Demons*; Blaen, *Medical Jewels* 64, 324; Lotz-Heumann U., "The Natural and Supernatural", in Rublack U. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Protestant Reformations* (Oxford: 2016) 688–707.

could be used for miraculous effect. Bread troughs could be used in conjunction with a spell to redirect wind and put out a fire and axes could mark the threshold for protection of newly-weds, new mothers and the deceased.[27] From this lay perspective, as Ulinka Rublack has noted, the Protestant Reformation 'was not a "disenchanted" religion [...] which drew clear and tight boundaries between "religion" and "magic"', but rather, people 'expected religion to protect them against misfortune'.[28] Enchantment has thus been reinscribed into the Protestant narrative. Whilst these studies have argued for Protestant enchantment and in some cases made subtle distinctions between Protestant and Catholic types of recourse to the divine, recent work has found that men and women of these different confessions also engaged in a 'shared cosmology'.[29] Both Protestants and Catholics united in an understanding of nature advanced by early modern natural philosophers.[30]

Examining lived religious practices, historians have long established the connections that existed between religion and so-called magic in daily life. They describe the lines or 'boundaries' between magic and religion as 'fine', 'blurred' and 'shifting' in this period.[31] Others have described separate but interrelated, 'overlapping', or 'intersecting' systems of belief of astrology, witchcraft, and magical healing in parallel with religion.[32] However, such vocabulary still suggests an underlying separation of 'religion' and 'magic'. Recent work has cautioned against putting 'artificial boundaries on a fluid system'.[33] Here, I suggest the need to go one step further.[34] Investigating materiality – in particular here, the prominence and use of natural matter in amulets alongside early

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27   Scribner R., *Religion and Culture in Germany (1400–1800)*, ed. L. Roper (Leiden: 2001) 287, 317, 341; Scribner R., *For the Sake of Simple Folk: Popular Propaganda for the German Reformation* (Cambridge: 1981) 5.

28   Rublack U., *Reformation Europe* (Cambridge: 2005) 156.

29   Lotz-Heumann, "The Natural and Supernatural" 689–690; distinctions between confessions highlighted for example in Scribner, *Religion and Culture* 326, 287–301.

30   Further work needs to be done to compare the place of Jewish understanding of nature: see Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition* 132–152, especially 135–6; and *Pe'amim* 85 (2000).

31   Musacchio, "Lambs, Coral, Teeth" 156; Walsham A., "The Reformation and the 'Disenchantment of the World' Reassessed", *The Historical Journal* 51, 2 (2008) 497–528, here 501–502.

32   Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* ix, 761; Greyerz K. von, *Religion and Culture in Early Modern Europe, 1500–1800* (Oxford: 2008) 6.

33   Lotz-Heumann, "The Natural and Supernatural" 690.

34   In what follows, I build on Kieckhefer's idea of rationality in magic but explore its early modern contexts, its particular religious dimensions and how amulets give unique access to how these ideas may have circulated amongst the laity. Kieckhefer, "The Specific Rationality".

modern views about the natural world – reveals that these were not flowing, overlapping systems of belief, but a unified system of the divine with an internal structure in which God pervaded all elements. There was logic to how the divine could work through these shards of stone or animal matter. From a lay perspective the use of amulets and precious stones was not 'enchantment', but stemmed from a belief in a cosmology in which the divine was present in and could work through the natural world. To reveal the intersections and connections of this system, Part 2 more closely examines contemporary understandings of natural philosophy and the materiality of these amulets.

2   Amulets as Instruments of Divine Power

Stones and natural matter had long been believed to have specific virtues. Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* (*c.*77–9 AD), and *De Mineralibus* and *De Occultis Naturae* by Albertus Magnus (1193–1280) outlined such virtues. These early treatises were printed and widely distributed in the sixteenth century. Copies even occasionally appeared in the libraries of Prague burghers.[35] Furthermore, numerous new lapidaries in the early modern period revisited, tested and promulgated the virtues of protection and healing that they had claimed as part of a reinvigorated interest in how the natural world worked.[36]

In 1609 one of the most significant works on the subject was produced in Prague. Anselmus Boetius de Boodt (1550–1632) became 'physician in ordinary' to Rudolf II in 1584. Whilst in Prague, he published *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia*, containing around 600 minerals with their properties including their 'virtues'.[37] In Book 1, Chapter 25, de Boodt explained how the powers of stones worked. He stressed that the stones themselves could only work in a natural or elemental way, producing effects such as magnetism, or medical effects like staunching blood. He stressed that the stones themselves could not produce what he called 'supernatural effects'. In terms of causation, anything supernatural that appeared to happen through gems or stones was not due to them, but to God or to a good or evil spirit subject to him. Thus, he disputed

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35   For example, Pliny's *Natural History* in Dorota Loselius (Old Town, 1635), AHMP 1176, fol. 111v; *De Occultis Naturae* attributed to Albertus Magnus in Dorotha Armpachová (Old Town, 1600), AHMP 1174, fol. 110r.

36   Evans, *Magical Jewels* 140–155; Blaen, *Medical Jewels* 120–137, and *passim*.

37   Boodt Anselmus Boetius de, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia* (Hannover, Typ. Wechelianis apud C. Marnium et heredes J. Aubrii: 1609); see also, Evans, *Magical Jewels* 152; Duffin C.J. – Moody R.T.J. – Gardner-Thorpe C. (eds.), *A History of Geology and Medicine* (London: 2013) 30.

the ability of stones themselves to darken the sun, make the wearer invisible, make men rich, eloquent, happy and secure, or detect adultery; anything that 'of nature cannot be done using ordinary instruments'.[38] The natural matter was only used as an instrument through which to manifest the effect. All the various powers attributed to precious stones were to be tested and investigated throughout the book, but de Boodt's overriding proposition was that only their 'natural' powers were automatically efficacious.

Whilst de Boodt wrangled with what effects stones produced and how, it is important to note that his work was still set within an overarching belief in which the natural world itself was imbued with divine power. God had created and designed the universe, and he was thus ultimately the architect of the natural powers of stones.[39] God's role in the power of natural matter was also tied to an early modern worldview based on Paracelsian philosophy. Starting in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries natural philosophers such as Marsilio Ficino (1433–1499), Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim (1486–1535), and Theophrastus Paracelsus (1493–1541) sought to understand the universe as a complex but ultimately 'rational' system.[40] These philosophers are often linked with early modern 'natural magic', and Neoplatonic and Hermetic thinking about the harmony of the universe that continued to have influence into the seventeenth century.[41] They engaged with the natural world as God's creation (following Genesis), but also used their skills as natural philosophers to uncover God's secrets: to find exactly how divine influences worked through and within nature.[42] Part of this endeavour was to seek explanation of natural causes through uncovering 'deep structures' in the natural universe.[43] Cosmologies, universal harmonies, sympathies and systems of

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38   De Boodt, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia* 42–43 in Evans, *Magical Jewels* 152; compare similar formulations in Gorkum Heinrich von, *Tractatus de supersticiosis quibusdam casibus* (Esslingen, Conrad Fyner: 1473) 3r–5v and Paracelsus Theophrastus, "Archidoxis Magicae Libri vii", in *Opera Omnia*, 3 vols. (Geneva, Joannes Antonius & Samuel de Tournes: 1658) vol. 2, 695 quoted in Cameron, *Enchanted Europe* 110 and 71–73 respectively.

39   De Boodt, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia* Book 1, Chapter 8.

40   Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion*; Cameron, *Enchanted Europe* 2; Kieckhefer, "The Specific Rationality" 820–821; Yates, *Giordano Bruno* 62–151.

41   Clark, *Thinking with Demons* 215, 222; Yates, *Giordano Bruno* 1–189; Evans, *Rudolf* 197; Gouk P., "Natural philosophy and natural magic", in Fučíková E. (ed.), *Rudolf II and Prague: The Court and the City* (London: 1997) 231–237.

42   Smith P., *The Body of the Artisan: Art and Experience in the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: 2004); on nature as a divine book, see Walsham A., *The Reformation of the Landscape: Religion, Identity, and Memory in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: 2011) 327–394.

43   Daston L. – Park K., *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150–1750* (New York: 1998) 163; Daston L., 'The Nature of Nature in Early Modern Europe', *Configurations* 6, 2 (1998) 149–172.

correspondences gave reason to the way that certain natural matter had the ability to act powerfully in specific ways.[44]

It is difficult to gauge to what extent the nuanced arguments of natural philosophy were taken up at a 'lay' level. The natural world was broadly understood by the laity to be deeply connected to the divine in this period.[45] Many of the meanings of matter in the early modern period reflected the idea of correspondences in a structured cosmology created by God. For example, folklore sources suggest that wolves' teeth may have been used as 'hunting charms' bringing good luck for a successful kill, or alternatively a tooth worn around the neck might work apotropaically against all wolf-like animals. Sewn into the cap of a first-born it could ferociously protect against the evil eye. A wolf's tooth could also act as an amulet against toothache, lunacy, fear of the night and, powdered, it could banish vertigo.[46] Wolves' teeth had these effects because they were imbued – in microcosm – with the powerful qualities of the animal. It was believed that God himself had given wolves the virtues of being nocturnal, fierce, good hunters, strong and unafraid of the steep mountainous environments they inhabited. Amulets encapsulated the powerful resonances in God's natural world, and were thus treated as an integral part of an extensive and connected religious culture.

In addition, some lapidaries and vernacular treatises were produced for a 'popular' readership.[47] Recent studies have also shown how artisans, apothecaries and marketplaces were potential mediators of current intellectual thinking and fashions.[48] Knowledge might be shared in unexpected ways and in varied combinations by such intermediaries and in such spaces. For example,

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44   Tambiah, *Magic, Science, Religion* 30; Yates, *Giordano Bruno* 151; Clark, *Thinking with Demons* 222; Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* 224; Musacchio, "Lambs, Coral, Teeth" 153; Scribner, *Religion and Culture* 321; compare also Blaen, *Medical Jewels* 120.

45   Crowther-Heyck K., "Wonderful Secrets of Nature: Natural Knowledge and Religious Piety in Reformation Germany", *Isis* 94, 2 (2003) 253–273.

46   *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, ed. [...] bächtold stäubli[...]. 10 vols. (Berlin – Leipzig: 1927–42) vol. 9, 768, 778, 781; for further use as 'teething sticks' and comparison with coral versions, see Ajmar-Wollheim M., "Geography and the environment", in Cavallo S. – Evangelisti S. (eds.), *A Cultural History of Childhood and Family in the Early Modern Age* (Oxford: 2010) 79; Krohn D. – Miller P. (eds.), *Dutch New York between East and West: The World of Margrieta van Varick* (New Haven: 2009) 244; Pointon M., *Brilliant Effects: A Cultural History of Gem Stones and Jewellery* (New Haven: 2009) 130–131.

47   Blaen, *Medical Jewels* 6–7, 79–82; for Italy see Cavallo S., *Artisans of the Body in Early Modern Italy: Identities, Families and Masculinities* (Manchester: 2007) 86 fn. 45. See also discussion of 'popular' understandings of theories in Kieckhefer, "The Specific Rationality" 835–836.

48   Cavallo, *Artisans of the Body*; Eamon W., "Markets, Piazzas, and Villages", in Park K. – Daston L. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Science*, Vol. 3: *Early Modern Science* (Cambridge: 2006)

Sandra Cavallo has suggested that jewellers employed medical knowledge of the virtues of stones when advising clients on their purchases.[49] It is perhaps not too much of a stretch to suggest that they may simultaneously have alluded to some of the theories about why certain items had these effects. The ownership of a wide variety of stones and animal matter suggests that men and women eagerly engaged with an understanding of the natural world in which it was imbued with power that could protect them against the exigencies of daily life, even if complex theories regarding how God exercised these powers through natural materials evaded full comprehension. As the keeping of religious items with amulets shown above suggests, using amulets was not considered dangerous, superstitious nor magical, but an everyday practice that could sit easily alongside supplication of the divine through telling prayer beads or praying with a crucifix.

Amulets made of natural matter allowed a wide range of social strata to access divine power. Although precious and semi-precious stones were expensive, they could be fashioned into tiny amulets available to men and women of modest means.[50] A minuscule malachite pendant held in the Victoria & Albert Museum [Fig. 10.3] shows just how simple an amulet might be. This item is one example of many 'heart amulets' usually kept in museum storage. It is tiny, measuring just 1.6 cm in length and width. Facing the body, the side stamped with the heart would have acted as a secondary, hidden aspect, probably known only to the wearer. The piece of stone has not been cut down to make a perfect heart form out of it, but rather metal has been used to fill gaps and therefore a greater part of the original stone has been preserved. Lapidaries attest that malachite was thought to protect against the evil eye, thunder, lightning and the soul falling into disorder, to strengthen the stomach and to save children from harm.[51] The extant item shows that even a fleck of the stone was thought to be efficacious and worth setting in silver. Such a modest object would have been obtainable by a wide clientele.

Burgher inventories reveal that gems were also widely accessible in the form of rings. Jan Petr's inventory from 1625 lists 22 rings in which the scribe identified turquoise, diamond, hyacinth and emerald, as well as 'red and blue

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206–223, here 210–211, 219; Welch E., "Art on the Edge: Hair and Hands in Renaissance Italy", *Renaissance Studies* 23, 3 (2009) 241–268: 256; Daston, *Wonders* 172.

49   Cavallo, *Artisans of the Body* 77–78.

50   Contrast claim by Blaen, *Medical Jewels* 58–59, 239–252; Kieckhefer, "The Specific Rationality" 833.

51   De Boodt, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia* 133; Nicolas Thomas, *A Lapidary, Or the History of Pretious Stones* (Cambridge, Thomas Buck: 1652), 145–146.

FIGURE 10.3   Malachite heart pendant, Bavarian (eighteenth century). Malachite, silver,
                1.6 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum (M.224–1975)
                IMAGE © VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM, LONDON

stones' which were likely to have been fake paste gemstones.[52] Although small items, rings set with stones were thought to be equally effective as pendant amulets in channelling natural powers. The author of the French version of de Boodt's *Gemmarum* attests to the use of a ruby ring to predict a death.[53] Like the malachite pendant, rings could incorporate merely a tiny shard of material to make them efficacious. A ring in the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague from around 1600 showcases a turquoise stone in a pretty, enamel-decorated (*Schwartzornament*) setting [Fig. 10.4]. Turquoise was a popular stone for marriage rings as it was believed to restore love between husband and wife.[54] The stone is not a 'perfect' specimen nor brilliantly crafted, and it is encased roughly in the gold setting. The dark oxidized veins across its face are not incorporated artistically, but as they happened to occur. Furthermore, an attempt to smooth the stone prior to setting it in gold has resulted in surface cracks along those lines. There was often an attempt to fashion these imperfect fragments of stone into pretty pieces of jewellery, but the overriding priority for craftsmen

52   Jan Petr (Old Town, 1625), AHMP 1174, fol. 339v; see also extensive collections in Jiří
      Gebuštrey (Old Town, 1600), AHMP 1174, fol. 122r and Anna Kutovcová (New Town, 1600),
      AHMP 1208, fol. 129v.

53   Thank you to Andrew Morrall for drawing my attention to this case in the French ver-
      sion of de Boodt's *Gemmarum et Lapidum* – Toll André, *Le Parfaict Ioailler: ou Histoire des
      Pierreries* (Lyon, Jean-Antoine Huguetan: 1644) 183–184.

54   De Boodt, *Gemmarum et Lapidum Historia* 137.
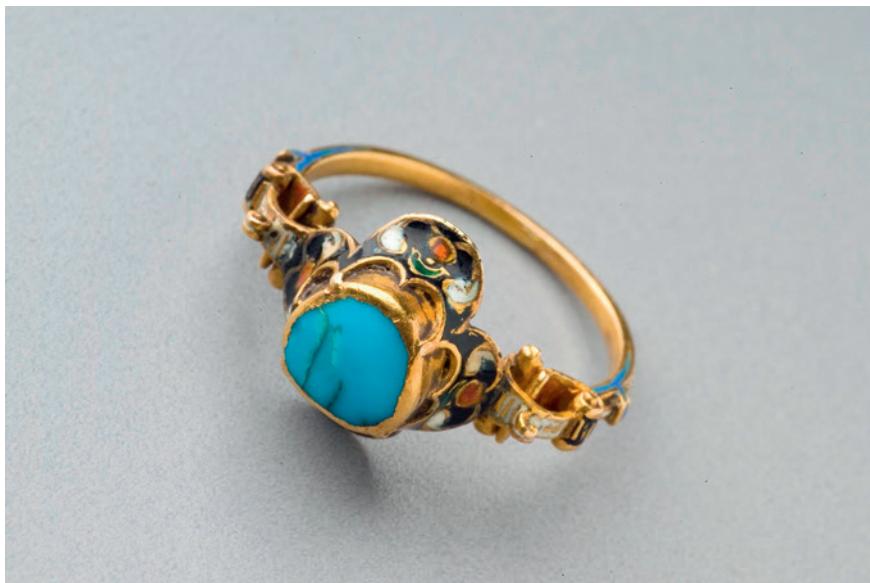
FIGURE 10.4   Turquoise ring, German? (c. 1600). Turquoise, gold, enamel. Museum of
                Decorative Arts in Prague (UPM 101.537)
                IMAGE © MUSEUM OF DECORATIVE ARTS IN PRAGUE

seems to have been to include as much of the substance as possible in the amulet, no matter how low the quality of the stone: it was the presence of the matter that counted.

3   Conclusion

The tiny and inconspicuous amulets that shelter in the storage rooms of many museums are a vital missing link for historians interested in lived religion. Amulets – though often sidelined as unimportant and inelegant shards of raw material – provide us with a way to understand and connect some of the most pressing debates of recent years. They show how a narrative of disenchantment and the division between religion and magic were absent in much of everyday lived religious culture. Rather, the natural material they incorporated acted as an interface that fused ideas about the divine and the natural world. They allow us to see how debates about religion and magic must be triangulated with those of natural philosophy. Instead of a blurred, 'fluid system', we can perceive in these practices around amulets the traces of a highly reasoned worldview about the structure of the universe and how the divine worked

through it. Finally they reveal how such intellectual beliefs permeated all social strata. At every level and across confessions, men, women and children could share a fundamental understanding of the divine in nature – perhaps not through a nuanced intellectual grasp of the theory, but through a material practice: by carrying a little piece of stone or tooth on their person.

Amulets were part of a wide spectrum of everyday religious objects kept in the home that allowed access to the divine. They were used alongside Catholic sacramentals, Protestant bibles, spells, or written talismans, and show that it was not just artificial objects that could 'order' the cosmic world, or negotiate the exigencies of daily life.[55] Natural matter itself had these capabilities and acted as a resonant interface with divine powers that were embedded in the material natural world since Creation.

Recent work that seeks to understand religion and natural philosophy in more deeply cultural terms allows us to reintegrate amulets into the history of this period and understand why they were so ubiquitous and important in daily life and so commonly recorded in Prague burghers' inventories. Amulets should no longer be forced into the problematic categories of secular, superstitious, folkloric or magical. Rather, placed at the centre of historical enquiry as objects integrally associated with the divine in the natural world, they can cast new light on everyday religion.

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55   Compare Scribner R., *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London: 1987) 1–2; Gentilcore, *From Bishop to Witch* 94; Scribner, *Religion and Culture* 299, 323, 349.

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Experimenting with Relics: Laypeople, Knowledge and Relics in Seventeenth-Century Spain

Igor Sosa Mayor

In 1628 Francisco de Herrera, a humanist scholar, expressed the suspicion that in the fourth century Christians could have fallen victim to religious persecution in the small town of Arjona in southern Spain. The excitement among the villagers was great and soon afterwards there were reports of apparitions of crosses that, allegedly, indicated the places where the mortal remains had been buried. Indeed, in some places human remains, showing signs of torture, were found. On the political and ecclesiastical level the discovery set in motion a whole machinery, with the aim of legitimizing these relics and declaring the martyrs the patron saints of the village. Over the last few years the topic of relics has received increasing attention from historians.[1] Recent studies of early modern relics have above all underlined the political effects of these religious objects on state-building processes and on the consolidation of town oligarchies.[2]

However, if we take a closer look at the sources, they provide a much richer picture of the active uses and practices involving relics among large parts of the population. In Arjona a large number of laypeople began to dig, circulate, exchange and 'consume' the different objects found, such as bones, nails, thorns and handcuffs. Laypeople, like the people in and around Arjona, used relics in

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1   Specifically, medievalists have contributed to this increased interest. A seminal work was Geary P.J., *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton: 1978). For the early modern period Simon Ditchfield has presented several contributions; see, among others, Ditchfield S., "Tridentine worship and the cult of the saints", in Hsia, R.P.-C. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, vol 6: *Reform and Expansion 1500–1660* (Cambridge: 2008) 201–224. Interesting general works have also appeared, such as Angenendt A., *Heilige und Reliquien: die Geschichte ihres Kultes vom frühen Christentum bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: 1994). This growing interest has led to intercultural and trans-historical collected works, as for instance, Walsham A. (ed.), *Relics and Remains*, *Past and Present* 206, supplement 5 (2010).

2   See, among others, Johnson T., "Holy Fabrications: The Catacomb Saints and the Counter-Reformation in Bavaria", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 47, 2 (1996) 274–297; Lazure G., "Possessing the Sacred: Monarchy and Identity in Philip II's Relic Collection at the Escorial", *Renaissance Quarterly* 60, 1 (2007) 58–93. For the case of rural Castile, see Christian W.A., *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton: 1981) especially 125–141.

very creative and varied ways. They created their own reliquaries; they produced so-called secondary relics; they used them creatively for several medical purposes, and they also expressed sceptical attitudes towards some relics by making ironical comments and jokes and expressing contempt about them.

As researchers have postulated in recent years, users attach meanings and values to objects going through complex social, religious and political processes.[3] 'Knowledge' plays a key role in these processes. Recent research has underlined the importance of taking into account different types of knowledge and how they were socially constructed, elaborated and consumed in early modern times.[4] We have to analyse 'the ways in which texts and practices of observation, experimentation, and material manipulation were interconnected', as well as the practitioners' knowledge claims and ontologies.[5] Whereas most research in this field is focusing on new interpretations of science and nature, my interest is in different types of objects and knowledge. Just like other knowledge, religious knowledge also has to be produced, negotiated and consumed in different ways.[6]

Relevant for my purpose is the fact that in early modern Catholic Europe the meaning and knowledge of relics – and sanctity in general – received increased attention. Two aspects were key. First, the Tridentine Catholic Church tried to control the validation of objects as relics and to promote legitimate uses of them.[7] Second, a systematization of knowledge of martyrs advanced in the early modern Catholic Church, mainly through means of new types of

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3   Because of the so-called material turn, there is now an immense quantity of literature on material culture. See, for instance, the contributions in Tilley C. et al. (eds.), *Handbook of Material Culture* (London: 2006). Also, Hahn H.-P., *Materielle Kultur. Eine Einführung* (Berlin: 2005).

4   See, among many others, Burke P., *A Social History of Knowledge*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: 2000); Dülmen R. van – Rauschenbach S. (eds.), *Macht des Wissens. Die Entstehung der modernen Wissensgesellschaft* (Cologne: 2004).

5   Ursula K. – Spary E.C., "Introduction: Why Materials", in Ursula K. – Spary E.C. (eds.), *Materials and Expertise in Early Modern Europe. Between Market and Laboratory* (Chicago – London: 2010) 1–23, here 5.

6   See, for instance, the contributions in Ben-Tov A. – Deutsch Y. – Herzig T. (eds.), *Knowledge and Religion in Early Modern Europe. Studies in Honor of Michael Heyd* (Leiden – Boston: 2013).

7   The 25th session of the Tridentine Council (*De invocatione, veneratione, et reliquiis sanctorum, et sacris imaginibus*) dealt with this polemical topic. See, briefly, on the Tridentine Council and relics, Angenendt, *Heilige* 242–244. On juridical issues related to relics, see Dooley E.A., *Church Law on Sacred Relics* (Washington DC: 1931). For the general evolution of the Catholic Church, see Hsia R.P.-C., *The World of Catholic Renewal, 1540–1770* (Cambridge: 1998). For general remarks about the effects of the new religious situation on popular culture, see Burke P., *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (London: 1978) 207–234.

knowledge: humanistic, historical, philological, medical, geographical and archaeological analytical tools, among others, became increasingly important for this process.[8] In other words, the Church tried to monopolize the construction of meanings and the production of knowledge about relics.[9]

Focusing on the case of Arjona, the following paper concentrates on two aspects of the relationship between the laity and relics. First, the fact that laypeople, always in an ambivalent relationship to Church authorities, inspected and even verified the quality of relics on their own, using different types of knowledge; and, second, the fact that laypeople carried out different experiments with relics, investigating their quality, their properties, even baking small breads (*panecillos*) out of the ashes found in Arjona. This alternative perspective on 'knowing' relics in turn provides new insights into the practices of domestic devotion: the home can be regarded not only as a place for praying or reading religious books, but also as a place for accruing religious knowledge through experiments.

1   Qualifying and Validating Relics

The findings in Arjona pertaining to the decade 1620–1630 have to be seen in the context of similar discoveries occurring all around the Catholic world in the period 1570 to 1640 (for example, in Cologne, Rome, or Granada).[10] The very specific circumstances of the findings in Arjona (very old martyrs, poor state of conservation, several uncontrolled excavation sites.) posed a host of challenges

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8   Only in recent times has this production received some interest from researchers. See, for instance, Touber J., *Law, Medicine and Engineering in the Cult of the Saints in Counter-Reformation Rome. The Hagiographical Works of Antonio Gallonio, 1556–1605* (Leiden – Boston: 2014). Known titles include Baronius Caesar, *Annales Ecclesiastici* (Romae, ex Typographia Vaticana: 1588–1607); Bosio Antonio, *Roma sotterranea* (Roma, Guglielmo Facciotti: 1632).

9   Catholic authors published many works related to this topic. See, among others, Biagio della Purificazione, *Tractatus de adoratione* [...] (Romae, ex typographia Iosephi Vannaccij: 1678).

10   The decades 1570–1640 can be considered as the central period in the shaping of the new Catholic post-Tridentine Church: dogmatic revitalization, theological clarifications, organizational changes. In this sense, relics played a central role in this process as a difference marker with regard to Protestants. Among the most important discoveries of relics are the so-called Priscilla catacombs which were 'discovered' again in 1578 and became an excavation site for hundreds of relics. See Angenendt, *Heilige* 250–251; Johnson, "Holy Fabrications" 278–280. Between 1588 and 1595 the so-called 'plomos de Granada' were also found. See, among others, Aguilera M.B. – García-Arenal M. (eds.), *Los plomos del Sacromonte: invención y tesoro* (Valencia: 2006).

which could, however, be boiled down to two central questions: whether these really were the remains of Christian martyrs of the late Roman Empire, and if so, which of the countless objects found at the excavation sites could be considered relics. In order to answer both questions, the official Church, represented by the bishop of Jaén, started a complex canonical process of authentication and validation of the martyrs (and their relics).[11] Nevertheless, there were also voices within the Church being raised against a positive outcome of this process.[12]

At the same time and to some extent independently from the Church, laypeople in and around Arjona began to excavate, dig, remove and analyse objects on their own. They took on the roles of 'experts' by verifying the nature and 'quality' of relics and the presence of miracles. In other words, they converted objects into relics and events into miracles. This was a complex social practice in which different agents, different spaces and settings, and different types of knowledge were at play. As for the agents, the sources present, as we will see, an extraordinary range of people from all social strata acting as relics 'experts' (poor men, judges, merchants, vagabonds, noblemen, clerics). Many different spaces in which laypeople interacted both with each other and with ecclesiastical officers about questions regarding relics and miracles appear in the sources (the excavation sites, private houses, inns, convents, ecclesiastical tribunals). In these spaces a transfer of information, objects, interpretations, concepts, and knowledge took place.

Just as varied were the types of knowledge that were elaborated and applied – anatomical, historical, devotional and archaeological (among others). By doing so, laypeople were not only contributing to the integration of the new relics and saints into the common life of the early modern Catholic world, but they also engaged in coming to an understanding of the mysterious events

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11   On this process, see Olds K., "The Ambiguities of the Holy: Authenticating Relics in Seventeenth-Century Spain", *Renaissance Quarterly* 65, 1 (2012) 135–184. The process produced a huge quantity of sources in which witnesses were interrogated about the miracles they had allegedly experienced by means of the relics of Arjona's saints. I will use (1) Villegas Bernardino de, *Memorial sobre la calificacion de las reliquias de los Santos Martyres de Arjona* […] (Baeza, Juan de la Cuesta: 1639); (2) *Memorial del pleito sobre el reconocimiento, aprovacion y calificacion de los milagros, veneracion y colocacion de las reliquias de los santuarios que se descubrieron en la Villa de Arjona* […] (Jaen: 1642) (hereafter *Memorial*); and (3) Tamayo Manuel, *Discursos apologeticos de las reliquias de S. Bonoso y Maximiano y de los demas mas martires que se hallaron en Arjona y de los milagros que Dios a obrado porellas* [*sic*] *antes y despues de suinuencion* [*sic*] (Baeza, por Pedro de la Questa: 1635).

12   The bishop's prosecutor adopted a very critical stance. See, especially, *Memorial* 19–33, 47–54.

occurring in Arjona. Finally, in order to carry out their own evaluations and take their own decisions about the circumstances surrounding the discoveries in Arjona, laypeople took a lot of variables into consideration, including the origin of the relic, its physical characteristics, its specific miraculous effects, the chain of owners, and the nature of the experienced phenomena.

An interesting space in which knowledge of relics was constructed, received and shared was the excavation site. In Arjona different excavation sites emerged, which rapidly became meeting points for different groups of people: local laypeople who came to dig on their own, ecclesiastical officers engaged in controlling the excavation site, doctors who were in charge of filtering animal bones, and foreigners who came to get hold of relics The plurality of agents present at the excavation sites, with very different professional backgrounds, led to the application of different types of knowledge (practical, humanistic, medical and ecclesiastical).[13]

For example, when Juan López of Arjona was digging – like many others – in the main excavation site, he found a bone which he thought could be valuable. Unsure about its real nature, he asked the foreman about it. The foreman bit off a piece of bone with his teeth and autonomously assessed it, deciding that it was of 'good quality'. Unfortunately, the kind of knowledge of relics the foreman possessed is not transmitted by the source, but it was clearly practical and embodied: as chief in charge of this excavation site he was acquainted with the discovery of bones and likely to consider himself expert enough to evaluate the bone. His intervention 'converted' the bone into a relic, circumventing the evaluation of Church authorities.[14]

However, the evaluation of certain objects and arrangements found at the excavation sites required more sophisticated interpretations, including complex archaeological, technical, historical and even anatomical knowledge. This was especially true for the discovery of pieces of wood, whole skeletons, small pieces of bone, nails, and lathes, found at different excavation sites in a very

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13   Recent research has underlined the creation of knowledge in places such as markets and piazzas. See Eamon W., "Markets, Piazzas, and Villages", in Park K – Daston L. (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Science*, vol. 3: *Early Modern Science* (Cambridge: 2008) 206–223. Burke, *Popular culture* 108–112, had already referred to marketplaces, inns, etc., as places of production of popular culture. Excavation sites were undoubtedly also similar spaces.

14   *Memorial* 467–471. Biting into bones to assess their quality as relics was apparently a common practice. See, among others, *Memorial* 528. As already mentioned, Church authorities tried to control the qualification of objects as relics, requiring them to meet certain criteria: the founding place had to be a historically proven place of martyrdom, the bones or other objects had to have true 'miraculous' properties (that could not be explained by/ related to so-called 'natural' causes). See for more details, see the references in footnotes 7 and 8.

bad condition (partially destroyed, or partially burnt).[15] A complex hermeneutical process began, in which the main question at hand was whether this had been the place of the torture and execution of the martyrs. Laypeople tried to reconstruct the complex puzzle using several interpretative strategies: observing, analysing and evaluating the signs of burning, the existence of nails (as signs of a potential crucifixion and therefore of martyrdom), and the exact position of these objects.

Specifically, humanistic knowledge related to the history of the Church became more and more important for gauging relics.[16] In the early modern period the religious production on historical, hagiographical, and technical topics was, as already mentioned, impressive. In western Europe humanistic discourses expanded very quickly during the sixteenth century, reaching even relatively small towns. Not surprisingly, by the first half of the seventeenth century, several people in Arjona, often with titles such as *licenciado* or *doctor*, were able to argue in a very humanistic way for the validity of the relics found in Arjona. They made use of historical arguments, putting in relation their knowledge about Roman archaeological findings (coins, city walls, etc.) and about the early Christian Church (names of supposed martyrs, places and times of alleged or real Christian persecutions). It was, in other words, a knowledge not based on practical skills, but on readings.

One central issue was the need to determine the antiquity of the town.[17] Only if there was certainty of the town dating back to Roman times was it possible to speak of ancient martyrs at all. Laypeople showed a keen interest in discussing this issue. The *licenciado* Andrés Navarro, for instance, debated with one cleric about the origin of the town, arguing that Arjona must have had Phoenician origins and that the existing fortress probably served as a prison in Roman times. The *licenciado* Montejo was also able to postulate a hypothesis about the origin of the town, 'por aver leido en varias Historias' (because he had read about it in several Histories). He argued for a Phoenician origin, grounding his opinion on certain architectural features exhibited by the tower and the fortress. Making use of his knowledge of classical sculptures and Latin, he was able to point to the existence of a sculpture of the Roman emperor Adrian, thereby proving the Roman foundation of the town.[18]

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15   A detailed description of the findings can be read in Tamayo, *Discursos* 274v–328r.
16   I define 'humanistic knowledge' as knowledge which is primarily based on books, the ability to read Latin texts, and historical knowledge about (pagan or Christian) Antiquity.
17   A detailed report of this issue and its problems in Tamayo, *Discursos* fols. 261r–274v.
18   *Memorial* 388–389.

Some laypeople were able to successfully link their abilities as sharp-eyed observers with their humanistic knowledge in order to offer careful descriptions of the disposition, the materials and the quantity of objects found at the excavation site. One telling example is that of *doctor* Juan Sánchez Ramírez, appointed by the ecclesiastical authorities as examiner of one of the big excavation sites in Arjona. He offered a very detailed account of the findings positioned near the city walls, describing precisely how many human skeletons were found, in which positions they lay and which signs of violence they exhibited. In addition, he was also able to accurately describe the objects excavated: some skeletons presented nails which pierced the bones; a pot was found in which – as he and others supposed – tar had been warmed to torture Christian prisoners; amputated fingers were discovered, etc..

The same Juan Sánchez Ramírez was able to bring forward different arguments. Regarding the complex archaeological evidence of the excavation site in Arjona, the question of whether the bones could have belonged to ancient Christian martyrs was by no means easy to answer. Juan presented several arguments in favour of his position. Firstly, he insisted on the anatomical evidence of the bones, since both their position and signs of torture pointed, according to his opinion, to martyrdom. Secondly, several bones showed signs of torture, for instance notches, holes and other marks. Referring to his knowledge of Roman torture practices, he argued that the methods of torture revealed by the bones were not usually used for ordinary criminals in Roman times. His opinion was based on his knowledge of Latin and ancient Church history, two elements which indicate his thorough humanist education.[19] Interestingly, the *doctor* claimed to have compared the bones found in Arjona with the descriptions of the wounds produced by ancient torture techniques. And, thirdly, he precisely analysed the spatial arrangement of different objects at the excavation site: for instance, the existence of a big cauldron which he interpreted as a method of torture used for Christians in Roman times.

The sources present *doctor* Juan Sánchez as often speaking with other town inhabitants at the excavation site. By making these explanations in front of other townspeople, people like *doctor* Juan Sánchez, *licenciado* Andrés Navarro

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19   Specifically, he mentioned his readings of works of authors such as Nikephoros Xanthopulos (1268/1274–1328) whose *Church history* had some resonance in this period with a Latin translation published under the title *Nicephori Callisti Xanthopuli, scriptoris verè Catholici, Ecclesiasticae historiae libri decem & octo* [...] (Basel, Per Ioannes Oporinum & Heruagium: 1561) (with several editions). The standard work on tortures was of course Gallonio Antonio, *De SS. Martyrum cruciatibus* [...] (Rome, ex typographia Congregationis Oratorij apud S. Mariam in Vallicella: 1594). See Touber, *Law*.

and *licenciado* Montejo were likely to influence their opinions about the events in Arjona. Many witnesses who were interrogated about the excavation site around the city walls used – at least according to the ecclesiastical records – the same ideas and words as *doctor* Juan. While it is not possible to prove that they were adopting his opinions, the fact that most of them referred to the conditions of prisoners in Roman times makes it probable that they had integrated this humanistic knowledge into their own interpretation of the remains found in their town. In essence, the position of people like *doctor* Sánchez linked objects of torture to martyrdom, ignoring the fact that parts of the Church were strongly opposed to this conclusion.

However, the humanistic written tradition was not the only source of knowledge used by laypeople to understand the distant events in Arjona. 'Practical' or 'professional' knowledge could also be useful to postulate hypotheses about the chronology of events. Pedro de Lara, public notary in Arjona, argued that the skeletons could not have belonged to Roman pagans, for he had previously seen Roman tombs and they had always looked completely different: the bodies were laid out properly and the niches were decorated with small, beautiful bricks and there were clay jars in the tombs.[20] In other cases, carpenters judged the quality of the wood of a lathe.

Other spaces such as private houses or inns were also common places in which knowledge about relics was discussed, applied or rejected. In such spaces other types of knowledge were also frequently invoked: a medical-anatomical knowledge and what we may tentatively call a 'devotional-sensorial' knowledge. The assessment of relics and corpses of martyrs by professional doctors is one of the most important developments in the history of Christian saints. Whether influenced by this discourse or not, anatomical knowledge was also highly valuable for laypeople in order to gauge the quality of a bone as a relic. In their answers many witnesses gave information and formulated hypotheses about the exact anatomical location of the bones they possessed. One of the main issues at stake was ascertaining whether the bones were human (and how to prove it).[21] But others went even further in their analysis of their

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20   See *Memorial* 183–184.
21   Some claimed to have a rib, others a femur, others toe bones. See *Memorial* 9, 416, *passim*. During the early modern period modern anatomy was developed. However this kind of new knowledge does not seem to have permeated to non-experts. As new research has shown, professional doctors only slowly integrated this knowledge into their own practical work. See, among others, Pomata G., "Malpighi and the holy body: medical experts and miraculous evidence in seventeenth-century Italy", in Cavallo S. – Gentilcore D. (eds.), *Spaces, Objects and Identities in Early Modern Italian Medicine* (Oxford: 2008) 96–113.

possessions. Catalina de Morales, for example, took home some bones from the excavation sites, which her husband examined very thoroughly. He tried first of all to distinguish human from animal bones; then he looked for notches in the bones as evidence of martyrdom. He concluded that one of them, which had a knife notch, was probably 'good' and that they should store it particularly carefully.[22]

Private houses were spaces in which relics and miracles were often validated by laypeople on their own. They frequently appear as spaces in which many people (relatives, friends, neighbours or clerics) came together to see, touch, kiss and smell relics.[23] The plurality of agents who acted as 'experts' for validating relics or miracles is surprising. Miguel Sáenz was a poor man who helped with the digging in one excavation site in Arjona. In the process he managed to acquire a piece of wood from a lathe that had been discovered and that was, allegedly, the instrument of torture of the martyrs. Some days later, constrained by his difficult economic situation, he burnt the piece of wood to heat his home. As a result of this, blood was found in the small burnt piece of wood, so that he and his wife were afraid of having committed a sin by burning the wood. The situation demanded an interpretation. Instead of asking Church officers, Miguel ran to his neighbour, don Bartolomé de la Barrera, a 'grave caballero' (a serious gentleman). Don attentively listened attentively to the explanations of his neighbour, then carefully examined the ashes, appreciated the value of a nail left among the ashes, and finally qualified the event as miraculous.[24] Apart from being a *grave caballero*, nothing seems to have qualified don Bartolomé as an expert in sacred relics. Don Bartolomé seems to have used a kind of devotional knowledge, which enabled him to assess relics and miracles intuitively.[25]

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22   *Memorial* 416. The use of relics as medicine was extremely creative. Most of the questions of the examination revolved around the issue of healing miracles. On medicine in early modern times, see Wear A., *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine, 1550–1680* (Cambridge: 2000).

23   For instance the home of María Fernández appears in the sources as a meeting point for many people. See *Memorial* 428–474. For examples of inns in which relics were shown and qualified, see *Memorial* 10.

24   See *Memorial* 327–329.

25   He was not alone. Many other people assessed bones by smelling them, by taking only clean bones, etc. See *Memorial* 403, 533, *passim*.

2   Experiments: Scepticism, Juridical Dispositions and Baking

Laypeople not only acted very autonomously in judging, validating and quali-
fying objects as relics and events as miracles, but interestingly enough they
also experimented with relics in different ways. At least three reasons can be
distinguished in the sources for experimenting with relics. One reason was
a rather sceptical stance towards either these objects or their miraculous ef-
fects. Secondly, the ecclesiastical juridical discourse about relics (and sancti-
ty in general) led laypeople to adopt different probationary strategies and to
focus on specific aspects of the sacred. Thirdly, experiments could be used as a
source of religious experiences.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, scepticism about relics
and miracles seems to have reached at least some groups among Catholic
believers.[26] The humanist tradition, the pressure of the Church to fight against
false miracles, and perhaps even the criticism expressed by Protestant theo-
logians, must have had an impact on these social groups.[27] As for the case of
Arjona and its martyrs, sceptical stances towards relics and miracles occasion-
ally came to the fore, although not always explicitly articulated. For instance,
after seeing blood on one bone from Arjona, the countess of Altamira explic-
itly declared that she was not a great believer in miracles. Some people attrib-
uted their healing not to the effect of the relics, but to the use of medicines.[28]
Other people suspected that the bones did not belong to humans, but to don-
keys. Occasionally people were suspected of faking relics and miracles.[29] The
sources from Arjona give a rich picture of the different practices of laypeople
in experimenting with relics. Laypeople took the initiative to investigate the
qualities of the bones and ashes by carrying out small experiments, trying to
exclude fake or natural causes for the effects they experienced.

Official ecclesiastical discourses also contributed to the construction of
local knowledge about relics and saints and to the tendency among laypeople

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26   Scepticism in early modern times is a complex issue which has received interesting con-
      tributions in recent years. A general philosophical introduction can be found in *Larmore*
      C., *"Scepticism", in Garber D. – Ayers M. (eds.), The Cambridge History of Seventeenth-
      Century Philosophy*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: 2003) 1145–1192.

27   For humanistic criticisms, see, among others, Angenendt, *Heilige* 233–241; Dooley, *Church
      Law* 45–46.

28   *Memorial* 30.

29   See, for instance, *Memorial* 452, 456–457, where María Fernández is under suspicion. A
      clear fake which was discovered can be seen in *Memorial* 524. People judging miracles in
      which children or adolescents were involved seem to have been particularly sceptical.
      See, for instance, Tamayo, *Discursos* fols. 129v–145v. Other cases can be found in *Memorial*
      42, 44, 507, *passim.*; and Tamayo, *Discursos* fols. 97v–104v.

to experiment with relics. Several spaces and agents appear in the sources as transfer points between these levels, for example, foreign clerics who stayed as guests in private houses, and civilians, such as doctors and judges, who collaborated with Church institutions as experts. However, among the spaces in which laypeople came in close contact with the elaborated ecclesiastical discourse on relics, the interrogation carried out in the canonical validation process was of paramount importance. In and around Arjona over 600 witnesses were interrogated by the ecclesiastical officers, which clearly reveals that the concepts used in official religious discourse reached a high number of people. The questions witnesses had to answer touched on many aspects: how they found the relic, what exactly they did with it, what they experienced, whether the bones or ashes bled, how much blood came out, which physical qualities the blood had, whether a fake could be suspected.[30]

The consequences of these examinations were highly ambivalent. On the one hand, although the Tridentine Church tried to rigorously control the validation and use of relics, the canonical process indirectly conferred a significant position to the witnesses. Through their involvement with the process, laypeople were enabled to express their own view of the events, stressing the aspects they wanted to underline. On the other hand, laypeople were obviously adopting and adapting the practices, concepts and ontologies of the ecclesiastical authorities (analysis of the qualities of the blood, adoption of some juridical techniques, use of the concept of the 'supernatural' and the 'preternatural').[31]

Finally, the idea of 'experimental religion' also has to be considered. The expansion of the 'experiment' in early modern times is related to the changing epistemological and philosophical context of the crisis of Aristotelian natural philosophy and of the development of so-called 'modern science'.[32] However, as recent research has shown, the concept of 'experiment' is also present in the religious literature at this time, in which it has a very broad meaning.[33] Apart from meaning 'experience', it postulates experimental knowledge as relying

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30   The exact wording of the question can be read in the many pages of the *Memorial*.

31   An account of the distinction between supernatural and preternatural can be found in Daston L., "Marvelous Facts and Miraculous Evidence in Early Modern Europe", *Critical Inquiry* 18, 1 (1991) 93–124.

32   The topic is too vast to be summarized in a footnote. See in general Park – Daston, *The Cambridge History of Science*. Relevant among others are also, Licoppe Ch., *La formation de la pratique scientifique. Le discours de l'expérience en France et en Angleterre* (*1630– 1820*) (Paris: 1996) and Anstey P. – Vanzo A., "The Origins of Early Modern Experimental Philosophy", *Intellectual History Review* 22, 4 (2012) 499–518.

33   For a good general account of the changes which the categories 'experience' and 'experiment' undergo during the seventeenth century, see Dear P., "The Meanings of Experience", in Park – Daston, *The Cambridge History of Science* 106–131.

upon trials and observations:[34] 'it places a priority on first-hand witnessing, it is useful, it provides motivations for practical activities, it is explicitly sought after rather than passively received, and, finally, it stands in contrast to knowledge that is merely notional and speculative'.[35] Indeed, the uses of the words *experiencia* (experience as noun) and *experimentar* (experience as verb) in the Spanish sources from Arjona, often denote the sense of 'trial' or 'test'. They also describe activities in which the agent is actively seeking some kind of evidence.

A telling example of some of these evolutions is that of the nobleman don Íñigo Fernández de Córdoba. In 1629 don Íñigo heard about a famous young girl who supposedly was able to make bones from Arjona bleed by putting them into her clothes (following a very common and typical pattern). Instead of waiting for ecclesiastical canonical approval, don Íñigo, who was rather sceptical about the girl and her supposed abilities, took the initiative to clarify the issue on his own. He brought the girl to his home and put her through a more or less thought-through experiment, imitating the practices carried out by ecclesiastical authorities. First, he wrapped a bone in a piece of paper and placed it in her clothes, close to her skin, and did not take his eye off her. Eventually the young girl fainted, and on unwrapping the bone don Íñigo found fresh blood on it. However, this did not prove anything to don Íñigo, who sceptically repeated the experiment several more times using other bones. Although the event could be repeated several times, the nobleman was not yet completely convinced of the nature of the events and the day after started another attempt, this time adding that he would pay for one mass for the Arjona martyrs. Soon afterwards the young girl fainted and the bone bled again. Don Íñigo eventually seemed convinced.[36]

The young María became a kind of provider of secondary relics in the form of pieces of paper drenched in blood. In order to obtain these secondary relics, don Íñigo and the members of his household first religiously and morally 'cleansed' the young girl: the young girl was forced to confess and take communion and even undergo exorcism. Even though sceptical at the start, the nobleman used ecclesiastical techniques that he had probably seen in church to imitate some of the trials carried out by bishops in similar cases, testing for fakes. And he even began to 'hacer informaciones de los milagros' (write

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34   See, among others, *Memorial* 6, 298.

35   Harrison P., "Experimental Religion and Experimental Science in Early Modern England", *Intellectual History Review* 21, 4 (2011) 413–433, here 422. Harrison uses Protestant literature. To what extent this is also valid for the Catholic world has still to be investigated.

36   *Memorial* 534–536; Tamayo, *Discursos* 107r–v.

reports on the miracles).[37] In order to gain moral certainty that this was a miracle, don Íñigo did not rely on customary devotional signs such as receiving a clue in answer to prayer, but painstakingly experimented with relics at home following canonical procedures.[38]

Don Íñigo was not the only one who experimented with relics. The 66-year-old Hipólito Muñoz was also an exemplary case. In November 1629 he witnessed a miracle at María Fernández's home, when one of the bones she had acquired from the excavation site began to bleed. Hipólito was very curious and examined the phenomenon thoroughly, observing the bone for at least an hour, noticing exactly how much blood came out, and recording what exactly he felt, as he later reported to the ecclesiastical officers. In a second interrogation Hipólito was able to add more details to his observations, and also reported on the experiments he had carried out with the relic in order to explore its qualities. To shed light on the whole issue, Hipólito had put on his glasses and observed the bone for an hour, paying attention to the colour and texture of the bone, declaring that 'mas parecia carne que huesso, y estaba todo morado (it looked more like meat than a bone, and it was completely violet). But that was not enough for him: taking a pin he pierced the bone three or four times, attentively analysing what happened. Hence Hipólito was able to describe in detail what the blood looked like and exactly how it came out of the bone. He also formulated the hypothesis that the blood must have been warm as it came out, since it coagulated very fast.[39]

The fact that, in a second attempt, Hipólito paid special attention to the blood's qualities was probably a consequence of the first ecclesiastical interrogation. As already mentioned, witnesses were asked about the qualities of the blood coming out of bones and ashes. The risk of fakes was obviously high and both authorities and laypeople were aware of this problem. Consequently, much energy was invested in describing, analysing and judging the physical

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37   Unfortunately it is not completely clear what the expression in the source means, but it probably points to the fact that they began to write down the events and circumstances of the miracles. For a complete example of the experiments carried out by ecclesiastical officers, see *Memorial* 405–408.

38   As in other similar cases, the home was the stage of this kind of experimental religion. Experiments in natural philosophy also often involved the whole household. See Cooper A., "House and Households", in Park – Daston, *The Cambridge History of Science* 224–237, here 229.

39   Hipólito does not seem to have been the only one who used a pin to analyse the bones from Arjona (or perhaps to fake the blood?). Pedro Hidalgo declared that he saw the *licenciado* Ibáñez performing the same operation with a bone; see Villegas, *Memorial de Arjona* 466.

qualities of the blood.[40] After all, the very validation of a miracle depended on it. Clerics were therefore forced to pay careful attention to these qualities, which is apparent from some of the answers of the witnesses.[41] Laypeople such as Hipólito integrated these requirements into their own observations and experiments. By observing the blood carefully, they often used the same words and concepts in their answers as the clerics.

The experiments with relics also took other creative forms. This is especially visible in the uses people made of the ashes found at the excavation sites in Arjona, which were suspected of producing miracles such as bleeding. Undoubtedly the most relevant use was the baking of small cookies or breads (*panecillos*) which were then consumed as medicine, either by eating or drinking them or by applying them to the skin.[42] The sources reveal an astonishing plurality of agents (men and women, pharmacists, doctors of law and even clergymen) who took part in these practices. By producing and consuming the *panecillos*, people were able to heal illnesses, pay debts, present themselves as good Christians, and, last but not least, experiment with the sacred and with miracles.

For instance, Juan Díaz de Salas, a chemist, described how he baked *panecillos*. First, he went to one of the excavation sites to get bones. Then he greased baking moulds using oil. He crushed one of the bones into small pieces and added the pieces to the *panecillos* dough, writing the names of two saints, Bonoso and Maximian, onto the breads.[43] The *panecillos* baked by Juan with bone splinters began to bleed. He was, however, not really convinced that this

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40   The bishop's prosecutor was especially sceptical about the blood phenomena in Arjona. See *Memorial* 26–29.

41   There are many examples. See, for instance, *Memorial* 289.

42   The production of the *panecillos* shows the blurring between production for private consumption and production for a kind of market. While some people produced only a few *panecillos* for their own personal use, the production figures are in other cases striking. The *licenciado* Montejo sent 800 pieces to Madrid and Luis Ibáñez had even set up a kind of industrial production: he produced 8000 pieces and – he added – he would be able to produce 8000 pieces more (in *Memorial* 383, 449). Ashes from Arjona got embedded in the big exchange routes of the globalized Spanish monarchy (Granada, Seville, Salamanca, Madrid, South America). The reasons for baking these *panecillos* are not explained in the sources. A practical reason was certainly the fact that the ashes could be transported more easily in this form into other regions. Interestingly, ecclesiastical authorities do not seem to have tried to control this practice.

43   Other people did not write any names, others used the names of Mary, Jesus, etc. Laypeople were probably experimenting with different names and testing the potential effects. The official Tridentine Church insisted on the fact that relics could only work when used to call up the saints to whom they belonged. In this and other cases, laypeople seem to have explored other possible ways of using the relics. See, for example, *Memorial* 382.

effect was caused by the bones and not by other factors. For this reason he started different experiments to exclude other causes ('para experimentar si desto podia ser causa'). First, he baked *panecillos* with other bones which did not come from the sanctuary. Nothing happened. Second, he baked *panecillos* without oil, and again nothing happened.[44] Juan Díaz was probably adapting some of the techniques he used in his profession as chemist, like the crushing of substances into small pieces, to the baking of *panecillos*. But, again, as in the case of don Íñigo, he confronted the potential miracle with an experimental attitude.

3   Conclusions

Two central evolutions took place in early modern times regarding the consumption of relics in Catholic territories. The Tridentine Church tried to control the validation and use of relics and the interpretation of sanctity. At the same time, new types of knowledge were required to qualify objects as relics: anatomical and medical knowledge for the analysis of bodies, historical knowledge for the identification of potential saints from late Antiquity, archaeological knowledge for the interpretation of excavation sites, etc..

   This process affected the complex relationships laypeople maintained with relics since it redefined the boundaries of what was religiously acceptable. Relics were now examined in private homes, they were subject to demanding medical analysis, they were sometimes even dismissed as fakes. However, by availing themselves of relics and incorporating most of the new rules imposed by the official Church, laypeople integrated themselves into early modern Catholicism as shaped by the Council of Trent. At the same time, the plurality of practices carried out by laypeople points to the fact that they explored the possibilities and boundaries of religious experience.

   By determining the quality of their acquisitions, and by relying on each other for authentication and classification, laypeople tried to some extent to defend their own interests against the monopoly on relics claimed by the Church. The construction of knowledge of relics by laypeople was carried out interactively and took place in different spaces (private homes, excavation sites, inns and convents), of which excavation sites deserve more attention. There, people

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44   Villegas, *Memorial de Arjona* 403–404. These experiments were again carried out by many
         members of the household, in this case by his sons.

with very different backgrounds came together and, as the sources from Arjona reveal, exchanged views, shared knowledge about relics, and made judgements about the quality of excavated objects as relics.

Laypeople combined different types of knowledge to assess relics, to manipulate them, to integrate them in their lives and to experiment with them. Practical and professional forms of knowledge, belonging to foremen, notaries, carpenters, were brought together and used to formulate hypotheses about objects and their potential status as relics. Laypeople with a humanist background provided their neighbours with clues in the form of historical analysis of the time of the construction of Arjona or torture practices in the Roman Empire. Although new developments in anatomical discourse do not seem to have had an influence, more traditional anatomical knowledge was used by Arjona's laypeople to analyse their findings. Using these types of knowledge, laypeople challenged some positions of the official Church on the status of various objects as relics.

Knowledge was not only 'used' by laypeople to qualify and validate relics, but was also sought after explicitly by experimenting with relics. Three reasons can be distinguished in the sources for this. First, a rather sceptical stance towards these objects existed in seventeenth-century Catholic Europe: both the humanistic tradition and Church authorities contributed to the idea that relics were to be mistrusted, unless and until their sanctity was proved. By carrying out small experiments laypeople took the initiative to investigate the qualities of the bones and ashes, trying to exclude other natural causes for the effects they were experiencing. Laypeople themselves sometimes adopted sceptical stances. There is strong evidence that, influenced by the on-going ecclesiastical juridical discourse, they adopted some probationary strategies and techniques for their own inquiries in order to exclude cases of fakes and forgeries. The ecclesiastical focus on specific aspects of miracles, such as the quality of the blood coming out of bones, contributed to shaping laypeople's tests and observations.

Such 'experiments' can also be seen, third, as pertaining to a rich strain of 'experimental religion', which requires further investigation. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that laypeople consciously carried out tests and trials with religious objects such as relics in order to see whether the outcome (for instance the bleeding of a bone) still appeared. By means of such 'experiments' laypeople were able to prove or reject the possible sacred character of their objects. At the same time, by doing so, believers were actively seeking experiences of the sacred at different levels – religious, sensorial and moral.

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Style as Substance: Literary Ink Painting and Buddhist Practice in Late Ming Dynasty China

Kathleen M. Ryor

Many scholars of religion have studied the so-called Buddhist revival of the late Ming dynasty in China (mid-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century) and have examined in great depth the syncretic nature of Buddhist doctrine and practice at this time. Correspondingly, art historians have noted a parallel resurgence in Buddhist figure painting by artists who also made a name for themselves depicting secular subjects. They have made a distinction in late Ming art between Buddhist paintings done often by anonymous artists for temples and monasteries, and scrolls executed by well-known artists, who were either themselves members of the literati or were patronized by this educated elite stratum of Chinese society. While art historians have noted this renewed interest in Buddhist figure painting among literati and literati-style painters starting around the last half of the sixteenth century, few have investigated the specific contexts for its production. With some exceptions in recent years, they have also tended to study these works in isolation from the artists' personal religious practices and beliefs.[1] In contrast to paintings and sculptures in temples, the production of Buddhist ink paintings reflects what could be termed an environment of domestic devotion, as both the execution and viewing of such works took place in the private realm of the home rather than the more public space of the temple. This essay will also investigate the ways in which artists' doctrinal affinities influenced the subject and style of their Buddhist paintings. It will argue that different types of Buddhist traditions and iconography, and study and devotion to particular texts and deities, all influenced individual artists' depictions of Buddhist subject matter. In addition, the essay will suggest that artists' choice of painting style was not merely replicating pre-existing

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1 For recent scholarship that investigates the links between an artist's personal religious practice and his painting of Buddhist subject matter, see Kent R.K., "Worldly Guardians of the Buddhist Law – Ding Yunpeng's *Baimiao Luohans*: A Reflection of Late Ming Lay Buddhism", *Record of the Princeton University Art Museum* 63 (2004) 62–89; Chen Y., "Wu Bin hua *Ershiwu Yuantong ce* [Research on Wu Bin's *The Twenty Five Great Deities of the Surangama Sutra*]", *Meishushi jikan* 13 (2002) 69–90; and Lo H.-C., "Shifting Identities in Wu Bin's Album of the Twenty-Five Dharma Gates of Perfect Wisdom", *Archives of Asian Art* 66, 1 (2016) 107–151.

artistic traditions, but was deployed mindfully to express Buddhist concepts and facilitate a variety of individual Buddhist devotional practices.

1   Chan Revival and Chan Style Painting by Literati in the Late Ming

Much recent scholarship on Buddhism during the Ming dynasty has been devoted to the relationship between the educated elite and state patronage and control of Buddhist institutions. This work has demonstrated that Buddhism declined after the early Ming dynasty (late fourteenth to early fifteenth century) as the result of several factors.[2] The first Ming emperor, Zhu Yuanzhang (1328–1398), instituted a series of reforms that disrupted institutional structures handed down from the earlier Song (960–1279) and Yuan (1279–1368) dynasties. His successors continued this policy, and in the early fifteenth century turned their patronage exclusively to Tibetan Buddhism. During the first half of the sixteenth century, the Jiajing emperor (r. 1522–1566) favoured Daoism and attempted to suppress all Buddhist institutions; the state closed many temples, confiscated their property, and even went so far as to outlaw the ordination of monks in 1544. In addition, pirate raids in the 1550s destroyed many Buddhist monasteries in south-eastern China.[3] Communications between Buddhist communities and the social elite also dwindled significantly during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[4]

Historically, many different schools of Buddhism found adherents among the literati, but the school most intimately associated with the educated elite was Chan 禪 (Japanese name, Zen). In Chan Buddhism, ultimate reality is not a transcendental realm, but is equal to the daily world of relative reality, and every living being has the potential to realize enlightenment. The Chan practice

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2   For more recent monographic studies of Buddhism during the late Ming dynasties, see Brook T., *Praying for Power: Buddhism and the Formation of Gentry Society in Late Ming China* (Cambridge: 1993); Wu J., *Enlightenment in Dispute: The Reinvention of Chan Buddhism in Seventeenth Century China* (Oxford – New York: 2008); McGuire B.F., *Living Karma: The Religious Practices of Ouyi Zhixu* (New York: 2014); Eichman J.L., *A Late Sixteenth Century Chinese Buddhist Fellowship: Spiritual Ambitions, Intellectual Debates, and Epistolary Connections* (Leiden: 2016).

3   For the impact of the *wokou* pirate raids on south-eastern China in the middle of the sixteenth century, see So K., *Japanese Piracy in Ming China during the Sixteenth Century* (East Lansing: 1975); Liang X., *Wokou zhanzheng quanshi* (Beijing: 2015).

4   Brook found that the exchange of poems between monks and literati in Nanjing dwindled to almost nothing after the early Ming period and that at the beginning of the sixteenth century the number of poems increased sharply. Brook, *Praying for Power* 94–95. See also Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute* 22–24.

of meditation stresses letting go of conceptual thinking and of the logical way in which we order the world, so that the appropriate insight and response arise naturally and spontaneously in the mind. Moreover, Chan Buddhism asserts that the concentrated mind can be achieved while doing so-called mundane tasks ranging from sweeping the floor to practicing calligraphy and painting. As a result, the goal of the Chan practitioner is to achieve a focused mind in all daily activities, in contrast to other forms of Buddhism in which rituals performed in a temple are considered most important for spiritual progress. In this way, Chan Buddhism, as experienced by lay practitioners, was almost exclusively a form of domestic devotion.

Although there were no eminent Chan masters in the Chinese monastic world during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, a group of literati active in eastern Zhejiang province, largely comprised of the major disciples of the Neo-Confucian philosopher Wang Yangming (1472–1529), invited their favourite monks who followed Chan to their intellectual circles.[5] As the work of Wu Jiang has shown, these literati who followed Wang's School of the Mind philosophy played a key role in reviving Chan and were particularly concerned about unqualified dharma transmission, a system that historically established a disciple as a successor to his master in an unbroken spiritual bloodline. Wu characterizes the interactions between literati and Chan monks as a reversed relationship in which the literati felt that they were qualified to judge the level of spiritual attainment of these monks. Thus, monks had to resort to these literati to gain insights into their own religion, in essence placing the literati in the position of master.[6] For example, Wang Yangming had a close relationship with one Chan monk, Yuzhi Faju (1492–1563), but evidence shows that Faju was only an ordinary unaffiliated monk without any sign of distinction in his Buddhist practice and who was actually greatly inspired by Wang Yangming and became an intimate of several of his disciples.[7]

Among all scriptures with close intellectual ties to Chan Buddhism, the most popular one on which the literati chose to comment was the *Shurangama Sutra*. The study of the *Shurangama Sutra* had a long scholastic tradition in Buddhist monasteries dating back to the Song dynasty. While exegeses of this text had been popular during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, the number

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5   Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute* 72.

6   Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute* 68.

7   Wu cites Araki Kengo's work on Yuzhi Faju in which he suggests that Faju later became a Chan monk who consciously introduced Wang's teaching of innate goodness into Chan Buddhism. See Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute* 68.

of commentaries written by literati during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries far surpassed those of previous periods.[8] The popularity of this scripture in the late Ming dynasty lay in the fact that it discusses the relationship between knowledge and action, a pivotal issue for the Confucian literati, especially for Wang Yangming and his followers.[9] The sutra is primarily a dialogue between the Buddha and his cousin and disciple, Ananda. The circumstances that led to the Buddha's teaching found in the sutra revolve around a courtesan's nearly successful attempt to seduce Ananda and break his vow of celibacy. Ananda is mortified by his error and seeks instruction from the Buddha. The Buddha explains that his error was not merely the jeopardizing of his celibacy, but ultimately his laxity in his practice of meditation and deeper mental concentration (*samadhi*).[10] Many important themes of Mahayana philosophy, such as the relationship between gradual cultivation and sudden enlightenment, and Buddhist cosmology and meditation, are discussed. The literati were particularly attracted to the *Shurangama Sutra* because it articulated their intellectual concerns over self-cultivation. Since literati excelled in learning, it was easy to identify themselves with Ananda, the main protagonist in the sutra, because he was the most knowledgeable person among the Buddha's disciples. Yet Ananda had difficulties with his moral cultivation.[11] The Buddha observed that while Ananda had the keenest memory and highest level of learning among his disciples, he neglected genuine practice and cultivation because he relied solely on his intelligence and special relationship with the Buddha.[12]

Not only did literati study and write commentaries on the *Shurangama Sutra* and other texts associated with the study and practice of Chan Buddhism, but they also produced paintings of Buddhist subjects. In the earlier Song dynasty, Chan discourse on spontaneity influenced literati critics' analysis of artistic production. In a Chan context in which mental discipline is emphasized, it is natural that writers also addressed the question of concentration in the art of painting.[13] In Chan painting of the Song dynasty, artists employed the

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8   Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute* 25–26.

9   Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute* 59–60.

10   The term *samadhi* means the correct mental concentration that is necessary to deeper meditative states. It also indicates the deeper levels of mental concentration that can be reached through correct practice. For a discussion of how the term is used in the *Shurangama Sutra*, see Buddhist Text Translation Society, *The Shurangama Sutra: With Excerpts from the Commentary by the Venerable Master Hsüan Hua* (Ukiah, CA: 2009) xiv.

11   Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute* 59–60.

12   Buddhist Text Translation Society, *The Shurangama Sutra* xxviii.

13   Ortiz V.M., *Dreaming the Southern Song Landscape: The Power of Illusion in Chinese Painting* (Leiden: 1999) 152.

technique known as 'abbreviated strokes' (*jianbi* 減筆). In this style, all non-essential brushstrokes in a painting were eliminated, as in the cursive form of calligraphy. This can be seen in an anonymous Song dynasty work depicting a Chan Buddhist master [Fig. 12.1]; even though the painting is very abbreviated, the painter's brushwork displays extreme discipline. Each line delineates form, suggests volume, and implies motion, creating an image of intense concentration and rapid execution.[14]

By the Ming dynasty, although naturalness and spontaneity continued as acclaimed ideals in art criticism, the specific style of painting that had arisen out of these ideals associated with Chan in the Song period came to be condemned by scholars as unrestrained and wild. Beginning in the thirteenth century, critics thought that the dramatic treatment of ink was too unorthodox and too far from the traditional laws of brush technique. For the scholar-artists of the literati class, a renewed orthodoxy translated into the disciplined calligraphic brushwork that had been advocated since the sixth century; hence they found the free mode of Chan Buddhist painting too crude and called it vulgar.[15] The general literati consensus was to value 'bone structure' (line and brushstroke) more than ink tones, and to place the brush at a higher qualitative level, because individual brushstrokes were said to reflect the character of the artist. While James Cahill has written about the persistence of what he termed 'Chan ink painting type images' into the Ming and Qing dynasties, his examination of this style of painting is fundamentally concerned with aesthetic issues of quality and disregards the context for the production of such works, as well as the meaning that both style and subject matter might express.[16] I would like to suggest that the persistence of the Chan painting style into the late Ming dynasty was connected with the religious function of the works within the private or domestic sphere.

Even though the literati criticized the style of Chan painting, some professional painters of the Ming period continued to employ strong contrasts in ink and strong, abbreviated brushwork in figure paintings of religious subjects, particularly Daoist deities. Around the middle of the sixteenth century some literati artists also turned to this style for Buddhist subjects. In a depiction

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14   Ortiz, *Dreaming the Southern Song Landscape* 145–146.
15   Ortiz, *Dreaming the Southern Song Landscape* 164.
16   Cahill J., "Continuations of Ch'an Ink Painitng in Ming-Ch'ing and the Prevalence of Type Images", *Archives of Asian Art* 50 (1997/1998) 17–41.

FIGURE 12.1   Anonymous, "Chan Master Riding a Mule"
(13th century). Hanging scroll, ink on paper,
64.1 × 33 cm. New York, The Metropolitan
Museum of Art, Bequest of John M. Crawford, Jr.,
1988 (1989.363.24). Image in the public domain

of the Chan Buddhist figure Shide[17] by Wang Wen (1497–1576)[18] [Fig. 12.2],
the painter deploys the bold and kinetic style originally associated with the
eigth-century painting master Wu Daozi,[19] and later with Chan Buddhist
painters of the Song dynasty. As in thirteenth-century Chan works such as the
painting reproduced at Fig. 12.1, there are a limited number of bold wet strokes
and little detail. The gestural quality of the painting process is completely
revealed. From extant sources it is difficult to discern the specifics of Wang
Wen's personal religious practice within Chan; however, the case of his younger
contemporary Xu Wei (1521–1593) demonstrates the connection between
subject matter, choice of style, and Buddhist practice. Xu studied with two
of Wang Yangming's major disciples and was a friend of the aforementioned
Chan monk Yuzhi Faju, who had a close relationship with the philosopher.[20]
In a hanging scroll depicting one of numerous manifestations of the bodhisat-
tva Guanyin [Fig. 12.3],[21] Xu Wei used the abbreviated brushwork method that
derived from the tradition of gestural painting first used by Wu Daozi, who was
noted for his intense concentration and rapid execution. In Chan terms, there
is no distance between the mind and the brushstroke; in other words, imme-
diacy and spontaneity could only emerge from an enlightened mind. Xu Wei's
Lotus Boat Guanyin has a similar approach to the image of a Buddhist figure
as Song dynasty Chan painting, in its simplification of form, strong contrast
of ink tones, loose brushstrokes, and rapid execution [see Fig. 12.1]. The artist's
inscription also underscores the concept of spontaneous enlightenment:

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17   Shide is a legendary figure who is said to have lived at the Guoqing Temple on Mount
      Tiantai with his friends Hanshan and Fenggan during the ninth century. They were either
      low level or lay monks who performed menial tasks of labor. The three figures are images
      of Chan enlightenment.

18   Wang Wen was a literatus who obtained the highest civil service degree, the *jinshi*, in 1532.
      He served as an official in several government ministries, but retired from the civil service
      in 1554. For a brief biography of Wang Wen and his son Wang Jian, see Goodrich L.C. –
      Fang C. (eds.), *Dictionary of Ming Biography 1368–1644* (New York: 1976) 1444–1447.

19   Wu Daozi lived during the late seventh and early eighth centuries under the Tang dynas-
      ty and was a professional artist who specialized in Daoist and Buddhist figure painting.
      There are many apocryphal stories about his virtuosity, the most famous of which relates
      how when he put the last stroke in the pupil of a painting of a dragon, the dragon flew
      off of the wall and into the sky. No extant works by him survive. His painting style was
      noted for the expressive vigour of his brush which created lively calligraphic strokes that
      alternated between thick and thin.

20   Xu Wei studied with Ji Ben (1485–1563) and Wang Ji (1498–1583), both disciples of Wang
      Yangming. For Xu's biography of Yuzhi Faju, see Xu W., *Xu Wei ji* (*Collected Writings of Xu
      Wei*) (Beijing: 1983) 622–623.

21   Guanyin is the more commonly used term for Guanshiyin, which means the Bodhisattva
      Who Hears the Cries of the World.

FIGURE 12.2
Wang Wen, "Shide Holding
a Broom" (middle of the 16th
century). Hanging scroll, ink on
paper, 117.8 × 54.4 cm. Taipei,
National Palace Museum
IMAGE © NATIONAL PALACE
MUSEUM

Illusion contains wisdom and awakening,
Passing through limitless waves;
In a nanosecond, sitting and seeing the *paramita* boat.[22]

The last line specifically references one of the most famous parables related by
the Buddha. In it, he tells of a man who creates a makeshift raft in order to leave
a dangerous place and get to the opposite shore of safety; once he has arrived
at the other shore he abandons the raft. The Buddha used this story to illustrate

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22   The term 波羅 is the Chinese translation of the Sanskrit *paramita*, 'one who has reached
      the other shore', and can refer to the title of the Buddha Who Has Reached the Other
      Shore (*tathagata*).

that the practitioner will recognize the usefulness of the teachings (*dharma*) but not become attached to them once he has attained enlightenment.

Xu Wei was primarily a secular painter of flowers and plants, yet when he turned to Buddhist subjects he depicted the bodhisattva Guanyin almost exclusively. Bodhisattvas are beings who have attained the highest level of enlightenment, but who out of great compassion delay their entrance into Buddhahood in order to guide other sentient beings. Guanyin is the one of the most important bodhisattvas in Buddhism and can appear to the devotee in many different forms. For this reason, in China, devotion to the worship of Guanyin existed in many schools of Buddhism. In the sixth chapter of the *Shurangama Sutra*, after the twenty-five great deities explain how their spiritual practice allowed them to enter *samadhi*, it is Guanyin who is held up as the model for Ananda to emulate. Xu Wei felt that he had achieved a high level of understanding of the *Shurangama Sutra*.[23] It also appears that this bodhisattva was of particular importance to Xu's Buddhist practice.[24] In the inscription on another painting of Guanyin that is no longer extant, Xu Wei makes explicit the connection between the importance of this bodhisattva and the style in which one depicts her:

> The *mahasattva* [or Great Bodhisattva] Guanyin,
> Uses her ear to enter onto the path,
> Thirty-two manifestations,
> The gateway to salvation is not merely one.
>
> This appearance of the bodhisattva
> Is painted without using colour,
> Resembling Wu Daozi,
> I obtain stone in order to engrave it.[25]

The second stanza identifies Wu Daozi as the stylistic model, while the first stanza makes reference to the thirty-two or thirty-three manifestations of Guanyin described in the *Shurangama Sutra*, as well as other popular Buddhist texts such as the *Lotus Sutra*.

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23   Xu, *Xu Wei ji* 639.
24   Xu Wei's collected writings have numerous poems and encomia that he composed for his paintings of Guanyin. He painted various manifestations of Guanyin, all in female form, such as the Fish Basket Guanyin/Wife of Mr. Ma, White-Robed Guanyin, Guanyin of the Southern Seas, Guanyin as an ugly old woman, etc. For a discussion of Guanyin's female forms, see Yü C., *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokitesvara* (New York: 2001).
25   Xu, *Xu Wei ji* 580.

In a different inscription on a no longer extant Guanyin painting, Xu Wei articulates the relationship between artistic styles and specific sutras:

> One Guanyin *dharma*, but there are two sutras that explicate it,
> The *Lotus Sutra* for other people's actions,
> The *Shurangama Sutra* for one's own conduct;
> Wenling and Gushan,[26]
> Both perfected these two sutras.
>
> There are two kinds of enlightened beings,
> Painters are also like this;
> One [kind] resembles [Wu] Daozi,
> One [kind] resembles [Li] Longmian.[27]

Here Xu Wei again makes clear his association with the free, abbreviated style first ascribed to Wu Daozi and later developed by Chan artists with the *Shurangama Sutra*. In this inscription, he contrasts the controlled fine line style known as *baimiao* 白描, made famous by the eleventh-century lay Buddhist Li Gonglin – whose sobriquet was Longmian (1049–1106)[28] – with that of Wu Daozi and the Chan painting tradition. That the style is part of his particular Buddhist practice is also evident in this stanza from one of five encomiums written on paintings of the different manifestations of Guanyin:

> If I don't believe,
> I inquire about it from Wu Daozi,
> Then I begin to believe.[29]

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26 Wenling is the Jiehuan, a Song dynasty monk and commentator on the *Lotus Sutra*, and Gushan probably refers to the monk Zhiyuan (976–1022), who wrote a commentary on the *Shurangama Sutra*.

27 Xu, *Xu Wei ji* 580. Even though this translation implies that Wu's style is associated with the *Lotus Sutra*, the other texts by Xu Wei cited here clearly indicate that he associated Wu's style with Chan and the *Shurangama Sutra*.

28 Li Gonglin was born into a family of Confucian scholars and received the *jinshi* degree in 1070. He served as an official in several positions, and was renowned as a painter, antiquarian and connoisseur. He was also a very serious lay Buddhist who followed a syncretic form of Chan practised at a centre in the Longmian Mountains where his country villa was located.

29 Xu, *Xu Wei ji* 981.

While the exact meaning of the verse is somewhat enigmatic, Xu suggests that somehow painting in the style of Wu Daozi has the power to further his religious beliefs.

Xu Wei thus painted images of Guanyin, whose method of attaining *samadhi* is seen as most efficacious in the *Shurangama Sutra*, in a style that requires control and focus, yet must be executed swiftly and spontaneously, qualities that visually approximate the notion of sudden enlightenment found in Chan Buddhism that was being revived in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The invocation of legendary artistic masters of the past was a hackneyed convention within many late Ming contexts; however, when certain literati artists who were Buddhist devotees refer to Wu Daozi's (and Li Gonglin's) style specifically in the production of Buddhist subject matter, the choice of style becomes a form of Buddhist practice that embodies particular and personal modes of focusing the mind within a private space.

2   Buddhist Syncretism During the Late Ming Period and the *Baimiao* Revival

While some literati Chan practitioners chose to paint Buddhist subjects in a style that had been traditionally associated with Wu Daozi and Chan Buddhism from the Song dynasty, others turned to painting in the stylistic tradition of the scholar and lay Buddhist Li Gonglin. Li's linear style of monochrome ink, known as *baimiao*, was taken up by later Song painters such as the monk-painter Fanlong, one of Li Gonglin's direct disciples [Fig. 12.4].[30] For example, *The Eighteen Luohans* attributed to Fanlong presents the physical features of the figures in pale ink and even, thin lines. Whereas secular artists who followed Li Gonglin's style maintained a uniform ink tonality and thickness of brush line, Fanlong, and other monk-painters, modified this mode by reserving a very light ink treatment for certain parts of the figures, suggesting that a mysterious body is lodged in a mundane and real environment.[31]

This extremely fine line mode of painting was also a visual analogue to concentrated practice, which was not unique to any one Buddhist sect. The three well known Buddhist monk reformers of the late Ming dynasty, Zibo Zhenke (1543–1603), Hanshan Deqing (1546–1623), and Yunqi Zhuhong (1535–1615),

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30   Fanlong (active middle of the twelfth century) was a follower of a style of Chan Buddhism practised at a centre in the Longmian Mountains that synthesized Huayan and Tiantai thought with Chan.

31   Ortiz, *Dreaming the Southern Song Landscape* 145.

FIGURE 12.4   Fanlong, "The Eighteen Luohans" (middle of the 12th century). Handscroll, ink
                on paper, 30.5 × 1062.5 cm. Washington, D.C., Freer Gallery of Art, Purchase
                (F1960.1). Detail of section 4
                IMAGE © FREER GALLERY OF ART

revived the system of monastic rules and regarded the practice of the Pure
Land School of Buddhism as a remedy and correction to what they considered
the unbalanced approach of Chan.[32] An emphasis on a disciplined method of
spiritual cultivation was common to their teachings, rather than the mind to
mind, dharma transmission found in Chan.[33] This syncretic Buddhist revival
among the literati towards the end of the sixteenth century, which merged
the practices of Pure Land and other schools of Buddhism, coincided with a
revival of *baimiao* painting of Buddhist subjects, particularly of luohans. As the
work of Richard Kent has shown, the late Ming artist Ding Yunpeng (c. 1547–
1628), the most prolific painter of Buddhist subjects of the time, had personal
ties to both Deqing and Zhenke and used various terms for a lay Buddhist in

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32   Wu, *Enlightenment in Dispute* 63.
33   Jennifer Eichman has studied Zhuhong's critique of Chan and his promotion of a variety
      of practices that he argued had spiritual efficacy. See in particular, Eichman J., *Spiritual
      Seekers in a Fluid Landscape: A Chinese Buddhist Network in the Wanli Period (1573–1620)*,
      Ph.D. dissertation (Princeton University: 2005) 169–194.

FIGURE 12.5   Ding Yunpeng, "Luohans" (1580). Handscroll, ink on paper, 26 × 343.5 cm.
Princeton, Princeton University Art Museum, museum purchase Fowler
McCormick, Class of 1921, Fund and gift of Lloyd E. Cotsen, Class of 1950,
in honour of Wen C. Fong, Class of 1951 and Graduate School Class of 1958
(2001–182). Detail of the third quarter of the scroll
IMAGE © PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM

his signature.[34] In Chinese Buddhism, luohans are the original disciples of the
Buddha who have reached the state of nirvana and are free from worldly crav-
ings. They are charged to protect the Buddhist faith and await the coming of
Maitreya, the enlightened Buddha prophesied to arrive on earth several mil-
lennia after the historical Buddha's death. They were exemplars because they
had suffered afflictions, extinguished all defilements, and severed all bonds
of existence and thus served as models of enlightenment for laypeople. Their
iconography by the Ming dynasty had also absorbed imagery associated with
Daoist immortals and other supernatural beings. Their popularity may thus
have been related to the more worldly goals of cultivating virtue and attaining
longevity.

Ding Yunpeng's choice of the *baimiao* style for his handscroll of luohans
dated 1580 [Fig. 12.5] reflects an interest in slow and sustained attention to de-
tail that is analogous to the disciplined practices advocated by Zhenke, Deqing
and other late Ming monk reformers. Every single brushstroke in this painting

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34   Kent, "Worldly Guardians of the Buddhist Law" 10.

FIGURE 12.6   Wang Wen, "The Eighteen Luohans Crossing the Sea" (middle of the 16th
               century). Handscroll, ink on paper, 32.4 × 138.4 cm. Berkeley, Berkeley Art
               Museum and Pacific Film Archive. Gift of James and Dorothy Cahill (1986.35)
               IMAGE © BERKELEY ART MUSEUM

is extremely thin and delicate, and the line work in the border of the luohans'
robes and their facial hair is nearly impossible to see with the naked eye. Ding
produced many paintings of Buddhist subjects in this style, but despite making
a living as a professional artist, there is very little evidence for specific patrons
for these works. This suggests a private function to the paintings; the hand-
scroll format in particular is one that is intimate in size and experience, since
only an arms-width of the scroll would be unrolled at a time. As a result, it can
only be viewed by a few people. The very illegibility of images executed in the
baimiao style further suggests that a viewing audience for the painting may not
be its primary purpose.

    If we compare a section of Ding's luohans with Wang Wen's painting of the
same subject [Fig. 12.6], we see how two different Ming artists choose one of
the two modes of painting associated with Buddhism – the Wu Daozi tradition
of bold calligraphic brushwork and abbreviation versus the pale fine lineation
of the *baimiao* style of Li Gonglin. These stylistic choices represent each art-
ist's own doctrinal affiliation and practice; Wang Wen with Chan, and Ding
Yunpeng with the syncretic teachings of Deqing. In contrast to Ding's deli-
cate pale lines of even thickness, Wang's style exhibits strong visual contrasts
between the bold calligraphic brushwork of the figures' robes and the thinner
lighter line used for the facial features. While not as abbreviated in style as

his image of Shide [Fig. 12.2], this depiction of Buddhist figures nonetheless emphasizes the sketchy kinetic quality found in Chan painting. Wang Wen has even included Chan figures in his composition, with a grouping of the founder of Chan, Bodhidharma, as well as Budai, Hanshan, Shide and Fenggan, placed between groups of luohans.[35]

While Ding Yunpeng was the most prolific painter of Buddhist subjects in the *baimiao* mode, he was by no means the only artist who depicted this type of subject matter in this style. Wang Wen's son, Wang Jian (1520–1590),[36] employed the *baimiao* style in several paintings of luohans, and the similarity in technique can be seen in his handscroll in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts [Fig. 12.7] depicting luohans crossing the sea. This theme symbolizes the luohans' role as agents of Buddhist salvation and their ability to enable others to cross over the sea of worldly delusions to reach the shore of liberation.[37] The fine, controlled lines in monochrome ink are so pale that the scroll demands sustained close viewing for legibility. Like Ding's handscroll, concentration is needed for both the production and reading of the work. The contrast between Wang Jian's luohans and his father Wang Wen's painting of the same subject is quite striking. While the style that Wang Wen employs combines concentration with kinetic energy, his son's faint, painstakingly detailed brushwork reflects the same level of intense focus but results in an image that is both representationally accurate and harder to see. It is difficult to connect either Wang Wen or Wang Jian with a specific Buddhist practice or teacher at this point, but Wang Jian would certainly have heard of all three of the well-known monk reformers and likely would have had some type of interaction with them, considering the elite social circles in which he moved. He did at least one painting of luohans for a monk, providing evidence that he had close interactions with Buddhist clergy and that he was a serious lay Buddhist.

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35   Bodhidharma was a Buddhist monk from Central Asia who came to China in the fifth century. He is traditionally regarded as the first patriarch of Chan Buddhism and was said to have established the Shaolin monastery on Mt Song. Budai was an eccentric Chan monk who lived in China during the tenth century and became identified with Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future.

36   This Wang Jian's name has the same characters as the much more famous early Qing dynasty painter who lived from 1598–1677.

37   Kent R.K., "Depictions of the Guardians of the Law: Luohan Painting in China", in Weidner M. (ed.), *Latter Days of the Law: Images of Chinese Buddhism 850–1850* (Lawrence, KS: 1994) 188.

FIGURE 12.7   Wang Jian, "Luohans Crossing the Sea" (ca. 1580). Handscroll, ink on paper,
                30.48 × 425.45 cm. Minneapolis, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Gift of Ruth and
                Bruce Dayton (97.139.1). Detail of second to last section of the scroll. Image in
                the public domain

3   Late Ming Women Painters and Buddhist Practice

For lay Buddhist painters such as Ding Yunpeng, creating Buddhist art was
more than just an artistic or professional activity, but a meditative exercise
akin to the copying out of a sutra, a task performed to gain karmic merit
through the state of mind that the practitioner brought to the endeavour. This
use of the *baimiao* style, however, was not limited to those who followed the
teachings of the monk reformers, nor to the depiction of luohans. During the
Ming dynasty, the cult of Guanyin was popular among women devotees, par-
ticularly the manifestation of the White-Robed, Child-Giving Guanyin. Texts
recount the stories of women and even some male worshippers who, after they
had chanted related scriptures a thousand times, all miraculously brought a
child into the world, usually a son. As Li Yuhang's work has shown, elite women
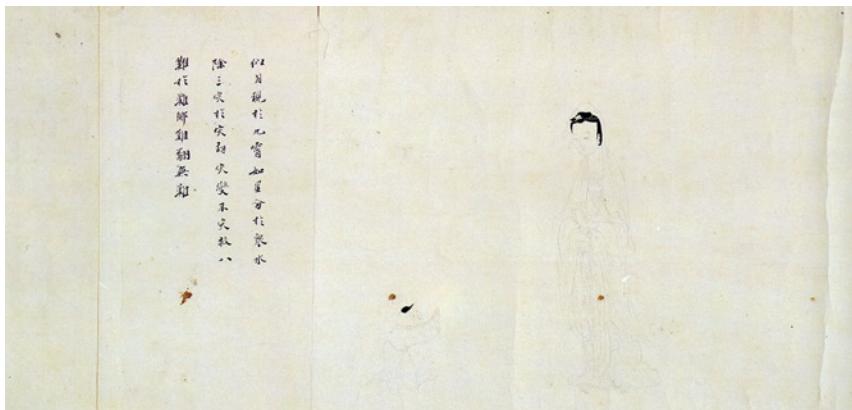
FIGURE 12.8   Xing Cijing, "Five White-Robed, Child-Giving Guanyins" (ca. 1614).
                  Handscroll, ink on paper, 30.3 × 371.5 cm. Qingdao, Qingdao Municipal
                  Museum. Detail of section 3. Reproduced in *Zhongguo gudai shuhua tumu*
                  (Beijing: 1986–2001), vol. 16, 299

of the period used the home as a space to practice Buddhism, and they also
engaged in practices such as copying sutras and making paintings just as men
did. Li has argued that the scroll of five images of the White-robed, Child-giving
Guanyin by Xing Cijing (ca. 1570 – after 1640), sister of the famous calligra-
pher Xing Tong (1551–1612), was done at age 40 after the birth of her only child
(a son) as a ritual act of gratitude [Fig. 12.8].[38] Li situates Xing within the milieu
of educated women from elite families who devoted themselves to the cult
of Guanyin. Her brother and his eldest son both copied images of, and sutras
devoted to Guanyin in order to pray for male heirs. Li's study of Xing Cijing's
scroll of five White-robed Guanyins emphasizes the content of the inscriptions
as evidence for elite women's worship of the deity. I would also like to suggest
that Xing's use of this very delicate and meticulous *baimiao* style for an image
of Guanyin was chosen, as in the case of Ding Yunpeng's luohans, as a mode
of disciplined practice that demonstrated her religious devotion to the bod-
hisattva and gratitude for Guanyin's magical efficacy in bringing her a son. Like
Ding Yunpeng and Wang Jian, Xing Cijing's handscroll uses extremely delicate
lines of pale ink to depict the figures; however, Xing's representation of each
figure is somewhat more simplified in their level of detail and the solid black
ink of the hair renders the face and body more indistinct by contrast. In this

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38   Li Y., *Gendered Materialization: An Investigation of Women's Artistic and Literary
       Reproductions of Guanyin in Late Imperial China*, Ph.D. dissertation (University of
       Chicago: 2011) 43–56.

FIGURE 12.9   Fang Weiyi, "The White-Robed Guanyin" (1656). Hanging
                scroll, ink on paper, 56 × 26.6 cm. Beijing, Palace
                Museum. Image in the public domain

case, Xing created the painting for a more specific spiritual goal in which her
devotion to this particular deity is expressed through a disciplined material
practice.

    Li's other case study of the late Ming widow Fang Weiyi (1585–1668) anal-
yses Fang's interest in creating images of Guanyin within the context of her
practice of Chan Buddhism. Despite the integration of the cults of the White-
robed Guanyin and the Child-giving Guanyin in this period, the White-robed
Guanyin's earlier association with Chan Buddhism had not disappeared,
as this form of the bodhisattva symbolized the serenity of Chan meditative

states.[39] A brief comparison of Fang's painting dated 1656 [Fig. 12.9] with Xing Cijing's work shows that Fang used the extremely abbreviated style of painting associated with Chan; moreover, like the literatus Xu Wei discussed earlier, she associated this mode of painting with the progenitor of this style, the eighth-century artist Wu Daozi.[40] Even though Xu Wei's work has a greater number of brush strokes and stronger tonal contrasts, both paintings depict the figure using long undulating strokes and create a strong contrast between the tiny faint lines in the face and the bolder more calligraphic strokes used in the clothing. Both Fang and Xu also make a specific connection in their writings between the concentration and immediacy of the Wu Daozi style and the Chan belief that immediacy and spontaneity in writing or painting emerge from the enlightened mind. While it is generally agreed that there were probably no genuine Wu Daozi paintings extant by the late Ming period, the understanding of this stylistic mode for the painting of Buddhist subject matter reflected a specific religious affiliation with Chan practices in contradistinction to the other style of figure painting traditionally associated with Buddhist subjects, *baimiao*. *Baimiao*, in fact, seems to have the wider semantic range since its practitioners in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were associated with diverse Buddhist devotional practices.

4   Conclusion

While this essay has set up a binary that contrasts a style associated with the legendary Tang figure painting master Wu Daozi, as filtered through the Chan Buddhist painting style of the Song dynasty, with the fine line style of painting known as *baimiao*, associated with the Song dynasty lay Buddhist literatus Li Gonglin, there were certainly other painting styles through which an individual artist's Buddhist practice was expressed. For example, Chen Yunu has demonstrated that the artist Wu Bin (active 1572–1620) viewed his painting of Buddhist subjects as a penitential ceremony, as well as a meditative act similar to sutra copying. Like other artists such as Ding Yunpeng, Wu indicated his devotion as a lay Buddhist in his various signatures, and was personally acquainted with Hanshan Deqing.[41] In contrast to both the free Chan style and *baimiao*,

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39   Li, *Gendered Materialization* 64.

40   Li Yuhang mentions that Fang said that, 'it was most difficult to [paint] the halo in a single stroke as Wu Daozi did'; see Li, *Gendered Materialization* 68–69.

41   Lo, "Shifting Identities" 109.

Wu's style of Buddhist figure painting used brush strokes of even thickness to create images with areas of dense detail, but the outlines are thicker than those employed in the *baimiao* style. His paintings also use colour and display fantastic exaggeration of form.

This preliminary study has argued that the choice of painting style, as well as subject matter, in the production of Buddhist images by lay Buddhist literati of the late Ming dynasty may be related to religious practices of individuals within the private space of their residences and studios. It has also suggested that specific styles and the depiction of specific Buddhist figures may reflect the particular Buddhist doctrinal affinities and practices of each artist. The adoption of the abbreviated calligraphic style associated first with Wu Daozi and later employed by Chan monks of the Song dynasty is linked to the revival of Chan. This revival sought to re-establish mind to mind dharma transmission and retained the central notion of sudden enlightenment. The use of the pale and controlled fine line style of *baimiao* associated with the Song scholar and lay Buddhist Li Gonglin was a form of execution that reflected the ideas of reformist monks such as Hanshan Deqing, who advocated disciplined practices such as textual study and ritual chanting, and who were critical of what they viewed as the excesses of the Chan tradition. In addition, preference for certain subject matter may well have been connected to these artists' own religious practices. For example, the depiction of Guanyin was related in some cases specifically to the Chan promotion of the bodhisattva as the role model for meditation, and in others to the cult of the child-giving manifestation of the deity. There were also other styles employed by late Ming painters of Buddhist subjects, especially one that revived an archaistic mode of colour and line painting, and hopefully future research will start to reveal the complex ways in which painting played a role in the personal devotional practices of late Ming elite men and women.

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PART 5

Prayer and Meditation

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'Thou Hast Made this Bed Thine Altar': John Donne's Sheets

Hester Lees-Jeffries

One of the best-known anecdotes about the poet and preacher John Donne concerns his posing for his own funeral monument.[1] The story is told by Izaak Walton, Donne's parishioner, friend, and first biographer; he was also by profession a linen draper.[2] There seems no reason to doubt it:

> Dr *Donne* sent for a Carver to make for him in wood the figure of an *Urn*, giving him directions for the compass and height of it; and, to bring with it a board of the height of his body. These being got, then without delay a choice Painter was to be in a readiness to draw his picture, which was taken as followeth. Several Charcole-fires being first made in his large Study, he brought with him into that place his winding-sheet in his hand; and, having put off all his cloaths, had this sheet put on him, and so tyed with knots at his head and feet, and his hands so placed, as dead bodies are usually fitted to be shrowded and put into the grave. Upon this *Urn* he thus stood with his eyes shut, and with so much of the sheet turned aside as might shew his lean, pale, and death-like face; which was purposely turned toward the East, from whence he expected the second coming of his and our Saviour. Thus he was drawn at his just height; and when the picture was fully finished, he caused it to be set by his bed-side, where it continued, and became his hourly object till his death.[3]

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1 Donne did not commission the effigy himself: it was commissioned and largely paid for, anonymously, by Simeon Foxe (1569–1642), son of the martyrologist John Foxe, who was one of Donne's physicians and his friend.

2 Walton (1593–1683) had been apprenticed to his brother-in-law Thomas Grinsell in 1611, and became a freeman of the Ironmongers' Company (the guild overseeing linen drapers) in 1618. He was part-owner of a shop in Chancery Lane. It is a tantalizing thought that Walton himself might have supplied the winding-sheet.

3 Walton Izaak, *The lives of Dr. John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Mr. Richard Hooker, Mr. George Herbert* (London, Richard Marriott: 1670) fol. F6r.

FIGURE 13.1   Martin Droeshout, "John Donne in his shroud", engraved
                frontispiece to Donne's *Deaths Duell* (London, Benjamin
                Fisher: 1633), fol. [A2v]

Although the sketch itself does not survive, the effigy, carved by Nicholas
Stone, does, and the drawing was also used as the basis for the frontispiece
for the printed edition of Donne's last sermon, entitled *Deaths Duell*, engraved
by Martin Droeshout. Both are familiar in discussions of early modern burial
rituals, vividly illustrating the 'Christmas cracker' tying of the shroud that was
the norm at this time. The sermon and the drawing preceded Donne's death,
on 31 March 1631, by a matter of weeks, but a period of serious illness eight
years earlier in the winter of 1623 had occasioned similar impulses of spiri-
tual preparation and self-scrutiny, including the composition of the *Devotions
upon emergent occasions* (printed in 1624) and, probably, the 'Hymn to God my

God in my sickness'.[4] This discussion is focused around a close reading of that poem, set in the context of other devotional texts and early modern material culture, and specifically what might be called the 'early modern textile imaginary'. Beginning her discussion of the specifically humoral nature of Donne's account of the body throughout his writing, Nancy Selleck notes that 'the humoral body suggests a *material embeddedness* of self and surround'.[5] This essay pauses on some things that might be taken for granted in these texts and their contexts, and brings out others that might remain *implicit*, a word that, like 'material embeddedness', is loaded in the context of the discussion which follows.

In the later engraving of Donne in his shroud and the subsequent stone effigy based on the same image, the winding sheet is unambiguous in its function. Yet in the writings from his earlier period of illness, the unfixed potentialities of the speaker's textile environment (or, to be less lofty, his bed-sheets) form an implicit, and sometimes explicit, part of his meditations. That sheet is not yet a winding sheet, although it unmistakeably points towards that functional potential. While Donne's sheet may be a *memento mori*, it also proposes a material connection with the Incarnation and the life of Christ. Although the word 'sheet' doesn't appear in Donne's poem, this essay proposes that the sheet as a textile thing is materially central to its conceits. It explores the special characteristics of the bedchamber as a devotional space by focusing on one of its most central, least remarkable properties, an ordinary, everyday thing which both occasions devotion and can be rendered extraordinary by it.

At a time when coffins were largely the preserve of the rich, the shroud was common to all burials, and it seems most likely that shrouds or winding sheets were just that, an ordinary household sheet, perhaps the one on which the person had died or, more likely, a clean one, perhaps of higher quality, taken from the household linen stores. By the time of Donne's death there is also evidence that shrouds, as such, could be purchased.[6] Many texts suggest the way in which ordinary sheets anticipated the winding sheet, just as sleep prefigured death, meaning that, as Donne himself put it, 'Euery nights bed is a

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4   It has sometimes been suggested that the 'Hymn' was written when Donne was dying, rather than during the earlier period of illness in 1623. As Alison Shell suggests, 'Donne may have returned to it on his deathbed, or Walton may have streamlined events to improve the story, but the possibility of elision and confusion has its origin in Donne's own awareness that one cannot know in advance which illness will be one's last'. "The Death of Donne", in Flynn D. – Hester M.T. – Shami J. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of John Donne* (Oxford: 2011) 646–657, here 657.

5   Selleck N., "Donne's Body", *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 41 (2001) 149–174, here 150.

6   Litten J., *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral Since 1450* (London: 1991) 71–72.

Type of the *graue*'.[7] Preaching at the funeral of Elizabeth Juxon in 1619, Stephen Denison was even more prescriptive:

> [...] vnexpected death is the most bitter and terrible. Therefore let thy bed put thee dayly in minde of thy graue, and thy sleepe of thy death; let the putting off thy garments put thee in minde of laying downe this tabernacle of thy body; yea let thy sheetes put thee in minde of thy winding sheete; and the clothes which couer thee in thy bed, put thee in minde of the earth which shall couer thee in thy graue.[8]

The conceit was a devotional commonplace: in one of the period's spiritual bestsellers, 'A prayer for the Euening' enjoined its reader 'Let my *sleepe* put mee in minde of my *death*, my *bed* of my *graue*, my *lying downe* of my *buriall*, my *vncloathing* of putting off this *tabernacle of flesh*, my *rising* againe of my *resurrection*, my *apparelling* of *putting on the Lord Iesu*'.[9] In a secular context, the prolific and self-promoting John Taylor (the 'Water-Poet') economically enlarged the same point in his long poem *The Praise of cleane linen*:

> *Cleane Linnen* now my verse descends to thee,
> Thou that preordinated wert to be,
> Our Corps first Couer, at our naked birth:
> And our last garment when we turne to Earth.
> So that all men *Cleane Linnen* should espie,
> As a *memento* of mortalitie:
> And that a Sheete vnto the greatest State,
> Is th' *Alpha* and *Omega* of his Fate.
> As at our Births *Cleane Linnen* doth attend vs;
> So doth it all our whole liues Race befriend vs;

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7   Donne John, *Devotions vpon emergent occasions and seuerall steps in my sicknes digested into I. Meditations vpon our humane condition, 2. Expostulations, and debatements with God, 3. Prayers, vpon the seuerall occasions, to Him* (London, Thomas Jones: 1624) fol. C10v.

8   Denison Stephen, *The monument or tombe-stone: or, A sermon preached at Laurence Pountnies Church in London, Nouemb. 21. 1619* (London, Richard Field: 1620) fol. F2v. On her death-bed, Juxon had requested that her funeral sermon be preached on Job 7.3–4: 'So am I made to possesse moneths of vanitie, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. When I lie downe, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro, vnto the dawning of the day'.

9   Featley Daniel, *Ancilla pietatis: or, The hand-maid to priuate deuotion* (London, Nicholas Bourne: 1626) fol. G8r. Its eighth edition appeared in 1656.

> Abroade, at home, in Church or common-wealth,
> At bed, or Boord, in sicknesse and in health.[10]

The sheet was a great leveller, both a *memento mori*, as Taylor specifically identifies it, and a signifier of shared humanity, from birth to death, as well as a potent and flexible spiritual conceit.

The way in which sheets furnished a particular connection between birth and death was explored by many other writers, not least because of that connection's reinforcement by high maternal mortality. Ann Donne died aged 33 in August 1617, following the stillbirth of her twelfth child; Donne himself preached her funeral sermon. In *Deaths Duell* (described by Walton as '*his own funeral Sermon*'),[11] he baldly stated that 'Our very *birth* and entrance into this life, is *exitus à morte*, an issue from death [...] In the wombe the dead *child* kills the Mother that conceived it, and is a murtherer, nay a *parricide*, even after it is dead', adding 'Wee have a winding sheete in our Mothers wombe [...] and wee come into the world, wound up in that *winding sheet*, for wee come to *seeke a grave*'.[12] In his preface to *The mothers legacie, to her vnborne childe* by Elizabeth Jocelin, printed posthumously in 1624, Thomas Goad reported that when Jocelin's pregnancy was confirmed, 'shee secretly tooke order for the buying a new winding sheet'; she gave birth to a daughter on 12 October 1622, 'whom shortly after, being baptized and brought vnto her, shee blessed, and gaue God thankes that her selfe had liued to see it a Christian: and then instantly called for her winding sheet to bee brought forth and laied vpon her'.[13] Although Elizabeth Jocelin had purchased a new winding sheet, for others the winding sheet might have been chosen as such for its particular sentimental associations. As Sasha Roberts pointed out in a discussion of beds on the early modern stage,

> The bed marked out rites and relationships in men's and women's lives – between husband and wife, father and son, mother and child – and so accrued a ritual and symbolic significance for their owners that no other household object could share.[14]

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10   Taylor John, *The praise, of cleane linnen With the commendable vse of the laundresse* (London, Henry Gosson: 1624) fol. A8r.

11   Walton, *Lives* fol. F4r.

12   Donne John, *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. G.R. Potter – E.M. Simpson, 10 vols. (Berkeley: 1953–62) vol. 10, no. 11, 231–232, here 233.

13   Jocelin Elizabeth, *The mothers legacie, to her vnborne childe* (London, William Barret: 1624) fol. A9r–A9v.

14   Roberts S., "'Let me the curtains draw': the dramatic and symbolic properties of the bed in Shakespearean tragedy", in Gil Harris J. – Korda N. (eds.), *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama* (Cambridge: 2002) 153–174, here 157.

Considerable stocks of linen were needed for childbirth, and these preparations could be seized on by moralising preachers who were perhaps ignorant of its necessity: in *A present for teeming vvomen* (1663), John Oliver commented sternly that

> all these [preparations] may prove miserable comforters, they may perchance need no other linnen shortly but *a winding sheet*, and have no other chamber but a *grave*, no neighbours but *worms*.[15]

In John Webster's *The White Devil* (perf. 1612), Cornelia and other women are discovered, '*winding Marcello's Coarse*': Marcello, Cornelia's son, has been murdered by his brother Flamineo, and Cornelia comments that:

> This sheet
> I have kept this twentie yere, and everie daie
> Hallow'd it with my praiers, I did not thinke
> Hee should have wore it,[16]

the 'twentie yere' suggesting childbed linen, perhaps a winding sheet bought in anticipation of Marcello's own birth. This is the shroud that Cornelia has been keeping for herself. The best-known example of the specific connection between wedding sheets and winding sheet is Desdemona's ominous instruction to Emilia in Shakespeare's *Othello*: 'Prithee tonight | Lay on my bed my wedding sheets [...] If I do die before thee, prithee shroud me | In one of these same sheets'.[17] In a similarly sentimental move, when Sir James Whitelock's wife Elizabeth died in May 1631, their son Bulstrode, the diarist and future parliamentarian, recorded that 'When the servants took out a winding sheet for her dead body, he caused them to lay forth the fellow of that sheet to wrap his own dead body in'.[18] Sheets do not often survive, their absence from the material record evidence of both their use as shrouds and their use and reuse into rags (and, of course, ultimately, into paper). Yet the bed-sheet could be much more than a potential shroud and a *memento mori*. The rest of this essay explores how and why.

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15   Oliver John, *A present for teeming vvomen* (London, Mary Rothwell: 1663) fol. A4v.
16   Webster John, *The works of John Webster* vol. 1, ed. D. Gunby – D. Carnegie – A. Hammond (Cambridge: 1995) 5.4.64–67.
17   Shakespeare William, *Othello*, ed. M. Neill (Oxford: 2006) 4.2.104–105, 4.3.22–23.
18   Quoted in Cressy D., *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: 1997) 430. Sir James Whitelock died in June 1632.

Donne's 'Hymn to God my God in my sickness' begins thus:

> Since I am coming to that holy room
> Where, with thy choir of saints, for evermore
> I shall be made thy music, as I come
> I tune the instrument here at the door,
> And what I must do then, think now before.[19]

The holy room, here, is a presence chamber; the speaker imagines himself as a musician, summoned to the presence of the king. The instrument is both his body and the poem itself (its five-line stanzas recalling the five lines of the musical stave) as he writes it. The poem's opening establishes its spatial parameters: the space of the presence chamber is metaphorical, but *that* this poem imagines spaces is crucial: as Caitlin Holmes puts it, specifically in relation to the *Devotions*, 'The material and spatial conditions of Donne's confinement acted upon him much in the same way that his sickness did, thereby participating in his composition'.[20] The room that the poem is largely imagining and inhabiting, as an anteroom to the presence of God (also, perhaps, an anticipation of the grave) and to astonishing metaphorical effect, is a bed-chamber, and this is worth pausing on.

To think about the spaces of devotion in the early modern household, especially in the Protestant tradition, might first bring to mind the closet, for private prayer, or the hall or parlour, for communal devotions in the godly household.[21] This is reinforced by Christ's injunction, in Matthew 6.6, that 'when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy doore, pray to thy father which is in secret'.[22] 'Closet' in the Authorised Version translates the Greek *tameion*, meaning 'private room', but the Vulgate has *cubiculum*, in which the sense of bedroom is more available, and all English versions of the Bible prior to 1611 translate it as 'chamber'. This might seem rather a nice distinction, but it is a materially important one, even if the two terms can also be used

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19   All quotations are taken from *The Complete Poems of John Donne*, ed. R. Robbins (Harlow: 2008). Subsequent references are given in the text.

20   Holmes C., "Claustrophobic Donne: *Devotions Upon Emergent Occasions* and Early Modern Quarantine", *John Donne Journal* 32 (2013) 149–73, here 155.

21   On household devotions, see Ryrie A., *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: 2013), chapter 14, 'Prayer in the Household', especially 363–389.

22   Although, as Alec Ryrie puts it, 'So much for the theory'. *Being Protestant* 144. My discussion here draws extensively on chapter 8 of *Being Protestant*, 'The Practice of Prayer'. Unless otherwise stated, all biblical quotations have been taken from the 1611 Authorised Version.

interchangeably (in the second Quarto of Hamlet, Ophelia has been sewing 'in my closet', in the Folio, 'in my chamber'). A closet was not usually, let alone exclusively, a bed-chamber, although it could be; what defined it was its privacy and, usually, its small size. (Productions of *Hamlet* tend to set 'the closet scene', 3.4, in Gertrude's bedroom: it might look a little different if Hamlet were to confront his mother in her study, or in a private oratory.) On stage, the closet would most likely be evoked by a chair, not a bed.[23]

Accordingly, as Tara Hamling has recently put it, 'Any attempt to get to grips with the material environment for spiritual experience in the early modern household must first address the powerful *but illusory* notion of the closet, derived in part from visual depictions showing prayer performed in solitude, located in the confines of a dedicated space'.[24] Solitude is further discussed by Alec Ryrie; he notes that it diminished distractions, discouraged hypocrisy and ostentation, and facilitated openness in prayer, but also that solitude and private space were not the same thing.[25] Hamling and Ryrie both draw on Lena Cowen Orlin's work which suggests that the closet's 'dominant purpose' in early modern England was secure storage, and that 'the closet as a dedicated study area was not actual but aspirational'.[26] The multiple remodellings of domestic spaces over extended periods is another potential source of confusion here, as closets were likely to be constructed with makeshift partitions, particularly in older houses, and even small apparently purpose-built 'closets' are frequently identified as being furnished as bedchambers in early modern sources: 'the material contexts for private devotion were almost certainly more ad hoc and compromised than visual and literary constructions of the closet would allow'.[27] The diarist Margaret Hoby (1571–1633), for example, distinguished between her private devotions and the public devotions conducted for her household by her chaplain; her chaplain was among those who read aloud while Lady Hoby and her women sewed. But she prayed and meditated privately in both her

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23   See the discussion of domestic space and its staging by Richardson C. in *Shakespeare and Material Culture* (Oxford: 2011) 99–127, and Orlin L.C, "Gertrude's Closet", *Shakespeare Jahrbuch* 134 (1998) 44–67; Orlin surveys the different kinds of use to which closets might have been put, including as bed-chambers (63); she notes the Q/F variation for Ophelia's encounter with Hamlet, cited above.

24   Hamling T., "Living with the Bible in post-Reformation England: The Materiality of Text, Image and Object in Domestic Life", *Studies in Church History* 50 (2014) 210–239, here 213 (*my emphasis*).

25   Ryrie, *Being Protestant* 154ff.

26   Orlin L.C., *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford: 2007) 301, 311, 324–5, and passim.

27   Hamling, "Living with the Bible" 215.

bedchamber and her closet, and also in the garden, and she sewed and read with her women in both closet and chamber.[28]

The bedchamber was central to the devout Protestant's devotional routine because he or she was enjoined to pray and meditate at the beginning and end of each day: most writers of spiritual manuals included prayers to be said upon waking and especially in the act of rising from bed, prayers which preceded the formal prayers which were then to be said kneeling beside the bed, and 'this continual meditative process is explicitly located within, and responds to, the material environment of the bedchamber', which might be decorated with texts or wall paintings drawn from the Bible.[29] All of these private devotions would ideally be followed by the household's communal prayers, held in what the popular devotional writer Lewis Bayly called 'some convenient roome',[30] which might be the hall, or a parlour, or another large room, depending on the location, size, status, and configuration of the house. Inventories and other records suggest that such spaces of shared devotions might also be the customary location of a large Bible, as a means of both fostering and displaying the household's piety; bibles and devotional works were also found in chambers and closets.[31]

But Donne's poem *requires* a bed. It sees the bed itself as a devotional space and being in bed as occasioning devotion, and not just because the sheets are a *memento mori*, or as part of a prescribed routine of daily private prayers and meditations, although it undoubtedly draws on such conventions. That it is a *sick*-bed also matters; it is not shared with a bed-fellow.[32] There is a rich tradition, especially in the Psalms, of the bed as a place in which to talk to and encounter God. This is not necessarily a comfortable experience: Job laments that 'When I say, My bed shal comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint: Then thou skarest mee with dreames, and terrifiest me through visions' (7.13–14), and the psalmist protests that 'I am weary with my groning, all the night make I my bed to swim: I water my couch with my teares' (6.6). Yet Psalm 41 also promises that 'The Lord will strengthen him vpon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sicknesse', and the account of the omnipresence

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28   On Hoby see, for example, Fox E., "The Diary of an Elizabethan Gentlewoman", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 2 (1908) 153–74. Hoby's diary is British Library MS Egerton 2614, and covers the period 1599–1605.

29   Hamling, "Living with the Bible" 218.

30   Bayly Lewis, *The practice of pietie* (London: 1613) fol. F3r.

31   Hamling, "Living with the Bible" 233–234; Orlin, *Locating Privacy* 320.

32   Ryrie notes that 'the bedchamber was no more private than anywhere else. Beds were commonly shared [...]' (*Being Protestant* 160). He discusses the bed as a space of prayer 160–61.

and omniscience of God in Psalm 139 begins by affirming that 'Thou knowest my downe sitting, and mine vprising […] Thou compassest my path, and my lying downe' and is as confident in its assertion that 'If I ascend vp into heauen, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there' as it is in the more breathtakingly phrased claim that 'If I take the wings of the morning: and dwell in the vttermost parts of the Sea: Euen there shall thy hand leade me: and thy right hand shall hold me' (139.2, 3, 8, 9–10). (It is not impossible that this particular psalm lies behind Donne's 'Hymn', not least in its dizzying alterations of scale, and its juxtaposition of the bed and the human experience with heaven, hell, and the entire world, all held fast in the hand of God.)

Walton noted that in composing his *Devotions* 'on his sick-bed', Donne was 'herein imitating the Holy Patriarchs, who were wont to build their Altars in that place, where they had received their blessings':[33] in Donne's 'Elegy 19: To his mistress going to bed', part of the poem's erotic charge in lines such as 'Now off with those shoes and then safely tread | In this – Loues hallowed temple – this soft bed!' (17–18) is derived from its echoing of Exodus 3.5 ('Put off thy shooes from off thy feete, for the place whereon thou standest, is holy ground'), and its assumption throughout that the bed might legitimately, even ordinarily be a devotional space, and a place of revelation and salvation. As Theresa DiPasquale notes, there is even an evocation of the death-bed, whereby 'the speaker specifically compares the body's disrobing for erotic communion with the soul's disembodiment at the point of death, and he goes on to assert that "As Souls vnbodied, bodyes vncloth'd must be | To tast whole ioyes"'.[34] In the *Devotions*, conversely, the idea that the bed might be a place in which to encounter God is something that Donne, for a time, resists, confessing that for him, the bed has hitherto been a place of worldliness and sin:

> Whither shall I come to thee? To this bed? I haue this weake and childish frowardnes too, I cannot sit vp, and yet am loth to go to bed; shall I find thee in bed? Oh, haue I alwaies done so? The bed is not ordinarily thy *Scene*, thy *Climate: Lord*, dost thou not accuse me, dost thou not reproach to mee, my former sinns, when thou layest mee vpon this bed? Is not this to hang a man at his owne dore, to lay him sicke in his owne bed of wantonnesse?[35]

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33   Walton, *Lives* fol. E2v.

34   DiPasquale T.M., "Donne's Naked Time", *John Donne Journal* 29 (2010) 33–44, here 35.

35   Donne, *Devotions* fols. C12v–D1r.

But he arrives, eventually, at an altered understanding:

> *My God, my God*, thou hast made this sick bed thine *Altar*, and I haue no other *Sacrifice* to offer, but my self [...][36]

with the meditation's closing prayer entreating,

> Onely be thou euer present to me, O *my God*, and this *bed-chamber*, & thy bed-chamber shal be all one roome, and the closing of these bodily *Eyes* here, and the opening of the *Eyes* of my *Soule*, there, all one *Act*.[37]

And in a sermon preached on Easter Day 1627, Donne had used very similar metaphors of domestic space, travel, and music, to those he explores more dramatically in the 'Hymn':

> if the dead, and we, be not upon one floore, nor under one story, yet we are under one roofe. We think not a friend lost, because he is gone into another roome, nor because he is gone into another Land [...] the dead, and we, are now all in one Church, and at the resurrection, shall be all in one Quire.[38]

As Jonathan Goldberg concluded, in an essay on the *Devotions*, 'The *Devotions* does not record the suppression of individuality; rather, the work reveals the continuities between private experience and the human condition',[39] and, it could be added, the experience of the divine.

The 'Hymn' is similarly invested in continuity, simultaneity, and elision and especially in these qualities as they might be experienced and apprehended in material terms, for example, in ideas about layering and flatness, the flatness of sheets, and of bodies in bed. In the *Devotions*, Donne comments on this too:

> When *God* came to breath into *Man* the breath of life, he found him flat vpon the ground when hee comes to withdraw that breath from him againe, hee prepares him to it, by laying him flat vpon his bed.[40]

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36   Donne, *Devotions* fol. P4v.
37   Donne, *Devotions* fols. P9v–P10r.
38   Donne, *Sermons* vol. 7, no. 15, 384.
39   Goldberg J., "The Understanding of Sickness in Donne's *Devotions*", *Renaissance Quarterly* 24 (1971) 507–517, here 517.
40   Donne, *Devotions* fol. C9v.

This is the conceit that takes off in the poem's second stanza, animating and enabling the rest of the poem:

> Whilst my physicians by their love are grown
> Cosmographers, and I their map, who lie
> Flat on this bed, that by them may be shown
> That this is my south-west discovery,
> *Per fretum febris*,[41] by these straits to die [...]. (6–10)

In the poem's central geographical and cosmographical metaphor, the bed and the bed-chamber can be lost. This is the stanza in which this essay's eponymous sheet does not, and does appear, for 'flat on this bed' implies both patient and, because of his identification with the map, sheet. The reader is asked to imagine a flat thing on another flat thing, a horizontal thing on a flat surface, a map on a table, a sheet on a bed. A sheet is also a sheet of paper, and Donne has anticipated its paperiness by the punning 'quire' of his opening stanza. Citing the passage from the *Devotions* quoted above, William Ober suggests that:

> Donne did not take kindly to being sick in bed; he found the position compromising [...] Being forced by illness to assume the horizontal decubitus violated Donne's image of himself.[42]

This seems a reductive reading, for, as the 'Hymn' demonstrates (not least in its final line), the experience of illness, and specifically the 'horizontal decubitus' appear for Donne both humbling and enabling.

The flatness of patient, map, and sheet is not their only quality, for the next stanza develops the conceit through an exploration of pliability:

> I joy that in these straits I see my West,
> For, though their currents yield return to none,
> What shall my West hurt me? As West and East
> In all flat maps (and I am one) are one;
> So death doth touch the Resurrection. (11–15)

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41   'Through the difficult and turbulent passage of a fever', 10n.

42   Ober W.B., "John Donne as a Patient: *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*", *Literature and Medicine* 9 (1990) 21–37, here 27.

Donne had elaborated this conceit in his preaching, initially in a sermon in the spring of 1623:

> In a flat Map, there goes no more, to make West East, though they be distant in an extremity, but to paste that flat Map upon a round body, and then West and East are one,[43]

and then again very close to his period of illness, in a sermon possibly written for All Saints, that November:

> as in the round frame of the World, the farthest West is East, where the West ends, the East begins, So in thee (who art a World too) thy West and thy East shall joyne […].[44]

The reader of the poem, like the congregation attending to the sermon, is asked to think about things in motion, and the ways in which their actions might be described. In the sermons, the conceit of the globe and map allows time and space, life and death to collapse, their distinctions transcended by God; in the poem, more complex, that which is to be wrapped is also the speaker's own body, literally in his bed-sheets, and proleptically in his winding sheet. In the words of one of Donne's Holy Sonnets, written earlier in his career, he is a 'little world made cunningly',[45] a microcosm, a term reached for too casually in most contexts. This is also a world that, as in another of the Holy Sonnets, has 'imagined corners',[46] like the suffering body hovering between states, life and death, two dimensions and three. And four, as the next but one stanza elaborates, in which time and history collapse as space already has:

> We think that Paradise and Calvary,
> Christ's cross and Adam's tree, stood in one place:
> Look, Lord, and find both Adams met in me:
> As the first Adam's sweat surrounds my face,
> May the last Adam's blood my soul embrace. (21–25)

The conceit of distant limits and disparate points being brought together here becomes one of elision and enfolding. But the essential, parallel play of

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43 'Preached upon the Penitentiall Psalmes' [1623], Donne, *Sermons* vol. 6, no. 1, 59.
44 'Preached upon All-Saints Day' [?1623], Donne, *Sermons* vol. 10, no. 1, 52.
45 'I am a little world made cunningly' 1.
46 'At the round world's imagined corners' 1.

surfaces upon surfaces remains: the fevered skin is filmed with sweat, soul lapped with blood.

Both the Incarnation and the *imitatio Christi* might be imagined and meditated upon in textile terms. The life of Christ, his birth and death, his personhood, is framed by cloth, from the swaddling clothes of Luke's gospel (2.7) to the linen of Christ's burial and, notably, resurrection. All the Gospel accounts of Christ's burial note the linen in which he was buried:[47] in the 1582 Rheims-Douay translation, with which Donne may have been familiar in his Catholic youth, Joseph of Arimathea purchases 'sindon',[48] now synonymous with Christ's shroud but also a particular kind of fine linen, on which Donne himself, or perhaps one of his friends, punned on the frontispiece to *Deaths Duell*: '*corporis haec animae sit syndon, syndon Jesu*' (may this body's soul's shroud be the shroud of Jesus). That Christ has triumphed over death is initially signalled by 'the linen clothes lying', the folded grave-clothes, and that curiously specific detail, 'the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linnen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by it selfe' (John 20.5, 7). Donne's specific invocation of 'the first Adam's sweat' (24) recalls another textile object found in narratives of the Resurrection: a sudary or *sudarium* (literally a 'sweat cloth'), used for the cloth with which Veronica wiped Christ's brow on the way to Calvary, but also for 'the napkin that was about his head' and, by extension, for the grave clothes in general: in the York play of the death and burial of Christ, Joseph of Arimathea tells Nicodemus 'A sudarye | Loo here have I; | Wynde hym for-thy, | And sone schalle we grave hym in grounde'.[49]

Early moderns shared these textile contexts and experiences. They too were wrapped in swaddling bands at their birth, and went to their graves in winding sheets of linen, an unremarkable, everyday continuity of experience with the Son of God. They wiped their fevered, sweaty brows with napkins or handkerchiefs. This continuity and awareness is again manifested in Donne's poem by the implicit presence within it of that sheet. Or rather, those sheets, for sheets (in those pre-duvet days) came in pairs, and appear as such in inventories: hence Sir James Whitelock's instruction that 'the fellow' of the sheet used as

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47   'And when Ioseph had taken the body, hee wrapped it in a cleane linnen cloth' (Matthew 27.46); 'And hee bought fine linnen, and tooke him downe, and wrapped him in the linnen, and laide him in a sepulchre' (Mark 15.46); 'Then tooke they the body of Iesus, & wound it in linnen clothes, with the spices' (John 19.40).

48   'And Ioseph bying sindon, and taking him dovvne, vvrapped him in the sindon, and laid him in a monument' (Mark 15.46). This transliterates the Latin *sindonis* and the Greek σινδών; OED suggests that by the early seventeenth century the term was used specifically to refer to what is now known as the 'Turin shroud'.

49   *English Mystery Plays*, ed. P. Happé (London: 1975) 550.

his wife's shroud should be put aside for his own. That sheets are assumed to be paired further reinforces the patterns of doubling and doubleness – Eden and Calvary, first and second Adam, Man and God, life and death – that animate not just these stanzas, but the whole poem.

Such doubles and pairs might also prompt further scrutiny of the workings of metaphor itself: in the letter to Sir Walter Raleigh printed with the 1590 edition of *The Faerie Queene*, Edmund Spenser had conceded, of his vast, moralizing allegory, that:

> To some I know this Methode will seeme displeasaunt, which had rather haue good discipline deliuered plainly in way of precepts, or sermoned at large, as they vse, then thus clowdily enwrapped in Allegoricall deuises.[50]

As both poet and preacher, Donne could deliver 'plainly': in a sermon preached at the 'churching' of Lady Doncaster in 1618, he observed that 'Our Mothers conceived us in sin; and being wrapped up in uncleannesse there, can any Man bring a cleane thing out of filthinesse';[51] the sheets here are implicit in the invocation of original sin. But he could also 'enwrap' his precepts, and in fact Donne uses 'enwrap' as his verb of choice to describe density and plurality of meaning and association. Above all, for Donne, the divine must be wrapped up in words: to take one of the many examples from the sermons, 'And this is the first act of his mercy, wrapped up in this word, *Veni, I come* [...] sometimes his Judgments may be plural, complicated, enwrapped in one another'.[52] In Donne's usage, wrapping connotes multiplicity and plenitude, above all the fullness of God. And in the 'Hymn', this sense of layeredness, of *implication* and enfolding is itself a profound spiritual and doctrinal truth: through the mystery of the Incarnation, the speaker of Donne's poem, and all humanity, are joined with God: wrapped, enfolded, implicated. Again, this was a conceit that Donne had employed already in a sermon, in this case some five years before his illness, in April 1618:

> We were all wrapped up in the first *Adam*, all Mankind; and we are wrapped up in the second *Adam*, in Christ, all Mankind too [...].[53]

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50   Spenser Edmund, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton (Harlow: 2001) 715–716.

51   'Preached at Essex House, at the Churching of the Lady Doncaster' [? December 1618], Donne, *Sermons* vol. 5, no. 8, 171.

52   'Preached on Christmas Day' [?1629], Donne, *Sermons* vol. 9, no. 5, 143, 149.

53   'Preached at Whitehall, 19 April 1618', Donne, *Sermons* vol. 1, no. 8, 293.

'Look, Lord, and find both Adams met in me', in this suffering, human body, swaddled in infancy, wound in death, and sick, perhaps dying, in bed, cocooned in linen sheets.

In the poem's final stanza, the sheet is once again transformed:

> So, in his purple wrapped receive me, Lord;
> By these his thorns give me his other crown;
> And, as to others' souls I preached thy word,
> Be this my text, my sermon to mine own:
> 'Therefore, that he may raise, the Lord throws down'. (26–30)

Echoing another of Donne's holy sonnets, the blood of Christ can, paradoxically 'dye[] red souls to white',[54] recalling the 'chrisom cloth', the white garment, signifying innocence, in which children were customarily dressed for baptism.[55] Donne's conceit in the 'Hymn' perhaps even glances at a bearing cloth, the rich ceremonial blanket or shawl upon which a royal or noble child would be presented for baptism.[56] There is, in this final stanza, a baptismal context too, of dying to sin and being reborn to new life quite literally in Christ, for the sheet is now empurpled by the blood of Christ, not spotted or stained (for the language of fleshliness and sin is textile too: 'Thou bidst vs *hate the garment, that is spotted with the flesh*. The *flesh* it selfe is the *garment*, and it spotteth it selfe, with it self'),[57] but richly dyed 'in grain'. Whereas in a sermon on the penitential psalms, Donne had imagined himself 'coffind', and shrowded in that sheet, the righteousnesse of Christ Jesus',[58] here the materiality of the poem as it has quite literally unfolded makes the metaphor denser, yet more transubstantial. Albeit still a sign of shared human experience, the shroud-sheet has now *become* Christ's blood. (There is an even more baroque version of this conceit in Richard Crashaw's 'Upon the Crucified Body of our Blessed Lord, Naked and Bloody': 'Thee with thyself they have too richly clad, | Op'ning the purple wardrobe in thy side'.) Whether or not there is a direct borrowing from

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54   'Oh my black soul' 14.

55   In the pre-Reformation church, babies were dressed in the garment after their anointing with chrism, hence the name. Babies who died within a month of their birth would be shrouded in their chrisom cloth and could be described as a 'chrisom child'. See Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death* 163, 211.

56   In *The Winter's Tale*, 'the bearing-cloth for a squire's child' found with the baby Perdita by the Old Shepherd is subsequently identified as 'the mantle of Queen Hermione's'. Shakespeare William, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. S. Orgel (Oxford: 1996) 3.3.111, 5.2.32–33.

57   Donne, *Devotions*, fol. P5.

58   'Preached upon the Penitentiall Psalmes', Donne, *Sermons* vol. 5, no. 17, 358.

FIGURE 13.2   Nicholas Stone the elder, "Monument to John Donne" (1631). Effigy of Donne, approximately life-size, wrapped in a shroud, standing on an urn. White marble in black marble niche, total height 305 cm. St Paul's Cathedral, London
IMAGE © THE CHAPTER OF ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

Donne's 'Hymn', the analogous conceit and the shared metaphor of domestic space in Daniel Featley's 'A Prayer for Easter-day' is striking:

> The graue by [Christ's] lying in it is turned to a bedde, and a withdrawing roome to retire my selfe a while, to put off this ragged flesh, and attire my selfe with robes of glory.[59]

In Donne's poem, the sheet is not (only) a shroud but a royal robe, and not of mockery, but of triumph: the speaker is now shrouded in, and, like Donne himself, will ultimately be resurrected, through the very blood of Christ.

Izaak Walton recorded that, at the hour of his death, his friend John Donne:

> as his soul ascended, and his last breath departed from him, he closed his own eyes; and then, disposed his hands and body into such a posture as required not the least alteration by those that came to shroud him.[60]

Donne's funeral effigy and the way in which he modelled it himself made a profound point about the resurrection of the body. Radically, he was not recumbent in his winding sheet, but caught in the act of arising from his grave, and his bed, on the last day. Yet its notoriety has perhaps obscured some of the more subtle contours of the context from which it emerged, a context in which ordinary domestic textiles, sheets, and the scenes and spaces of ordinary domestic life, could occasion profound meditations, not just on mortality, on the Incarnation, on the humanity of Christ, on the continuity of human experience with the events of Christ's life, from birth to death and resurrection, and of being wrapped, enfolded, held, in the love of God.

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59   Featley, *Ancilla pietatis* fol. L4v.
60   Walton, *Lives* fol. F7v.

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The Book as Shrine, the Badge as Bookmark: Religious Badges and Pilgrims' Souvenirs in Devotional Manuscripts

Hanneke van Asperen

During the latter part of the fifteenth century, metal badges were frequently attached to religious manuscripts. The objects were often removed at a later date, but traces found in the parchment – impressions, metal residue, and sewing holes or adhesive – reveal their former presence.[1] Traces of these badges are omnipresent, but often misinterpreted, overlooked or ignored in manuscript catalogues. The growing interest in the common practices of readers and their interaction with books has led scholars increasingly to focus their attention on badges that were attached to parchment. Megan Foster-Campbell has suggested that these inserted badges were used as instruments for the devotional exercises of mental pilgrimage.[2] For some book owners, pilgrims' badges must have been mementos of their own journey and it is tempting to interpret them as devotional aids that would help the devotee to re-visit the site of pilgrimage in the mind. This interpretation, however fascinating, deserves some scrutiny, for the context of the badge changed when it moved from the pilgrim's bag to the book of the stay-at-home. The badges often served more practical purposes.

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1   The few surviving examples of books with metal badges still extant include: Chantilly, Musée Condé, Impr. XIV. C. 3; *Olim*, Bonn Bad Godesberg, collection Hermann Kunst MS 5 (current whereabouts unknown); *Olim*, Cologne, auction house Venator & Hanstein, 25 March 2000, Lot 572 (current whereabouts unknown); *Olim* London, Christie's, 24 November 2007, Lot 10 (current whereabouts unknown); Oxford Bodleian Library, MS Douce 51; Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 1176 rés; The Hague, National Library of the Netherlands, MS 77 L 60; Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MSS Series nova 2596, 2624 and 12 897. Cf. Asperen H. van, *Pelgrimstekens op Perkament. Originele en Nageschilderde Bedevaartssouvenirs in Religieuze Boeken* (*ca 1450 – ca 1530*), Nijmeegse Kunsthistorische Studies 16 (Ede: 2009).

2   Foster-Campbell M.H., "Pilgrimage through the Pages: Pilgrims' Badges in Late Medieval Devotional Manuscripts", in Blick S. – Gelfand L.D. (eds.), *Push Me, Pull You. Imaginitive, Emotional, Physical, and Spatial Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Leiden: 2011) 227–274.

1   Religious Badges and Pilgrimage Souvenirs

In an article called *Sewing the Body of Christ*, Kathryn Rudy recently counter-argued that not all metal badges in books were pilgrimage souvenirs and she has subsequently suggested that some of these may have been souvenirs of the taking of Communion.[3] She called these wafer badges or *ersatz* hosts. One of the arguments she used in support of the identification of host souvenirs was the round impressions that many badges left in the parchment. Rudy sets the round offsets in the parchment alongside surviving cast badges in all shapes and sizes.

However, books did not contain cast badges. From the research so far, we know that only *stamped* badges were attached to books and these *were* usually round. The production of stamped pilgrims' souvenirs is documented in church accounts from various sites of pilgrimage in the second half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.[4] As numbers of pilgrims grew, so did the demand for badges, and more, and different kinds of objects were added to the merchandise available at cult sites. Around the 1450s, silversmiths and goldsmiths took up the technique of stamping images on thin sheets of metal – usually copper alloy or silver – for the production of badges.[5] A printed book of hours, published by Egidius Hardouin around 1515, contains two round pilgrims' badges, one from Le Puy and one from Saint-Claude [Fig. 14.1].[6] The first shows the Virgin and Child under a canopy flanked by St Anthony Abbot on her right and a bishop on her left. The other badge depicts St Claude enthroned. It is also true that the badges that have left identifiable impressions in the parchment were often demonstrably pilgrims' souvenirs. For example, a book of hours, probably produced in Hainaut, has impressions of several badges that cannot all be identified [Fig. 14.2]. Those that are identifiable depict the miraculous consecration of the chapel of the Virgin in Einsiedeln, St Adrian (venerated in Geraardsbergen), St Quentin (of Saint-Quentin), and the head

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3   Rudy K.M., "Sewing the Body of Christ: Eucharistic Wafer Souvenirs Stitched to Fifteenth-Century Manuscripts Primarily in the Netherlands", *Journal of the Historians of Netherlandish Art* 8, 1 (2016), DOI: 10.5092/jhna.2016.8.1.1.

4   E.g. De Mecheleer L., *Rekeningen van de Kerkfabriek van de Sint-Leonarduskerk van Zoutleeuw (1405, 1452–1599)* (Brussels: 1997); Vorsterman van Oyen G.A., *Het Archief van Aardenburg* (Middelburg: 1889); Koldeweij A.M., "Reliekhoofden en Pelgrimstekens. Nieuws over de Utrechtse Zilversmid Cornelis van Noert", in Rijen J.-P. van – Bergh-Hoogterp L.E. van den – Roessingh J.R.H. (eds.), *De Stavelij in Zilver: 25 Jaar Zilverclub* (S.l.: 2000) 31–37; Deys H.P., "De Pelgrimsinsignes van Sinte Cunera te Rhenen", *Jaarboek Oud-Utrecht* 67 (1994) 33–54.

5   Asperen, *Pelgrimstekens op Perkament* 92.

6   Asperen, *Pelgrimstekens op Perkament* 319–320.

FIGURE 14.1   Two pilgrims' badges, one of Le Puy (45 mm) and one of Saint-Claude (19 mm),
added to the blank folios of a printed book of hours (Paris, Egidius Hardouin:
ca. 1515). Chantilly, Musée Condé, Impr. XIV C.3, fols. 1v–2r
PHOTO © CNRS – IRHT (INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE ET D'HISTOIRE DES
TEXTES)
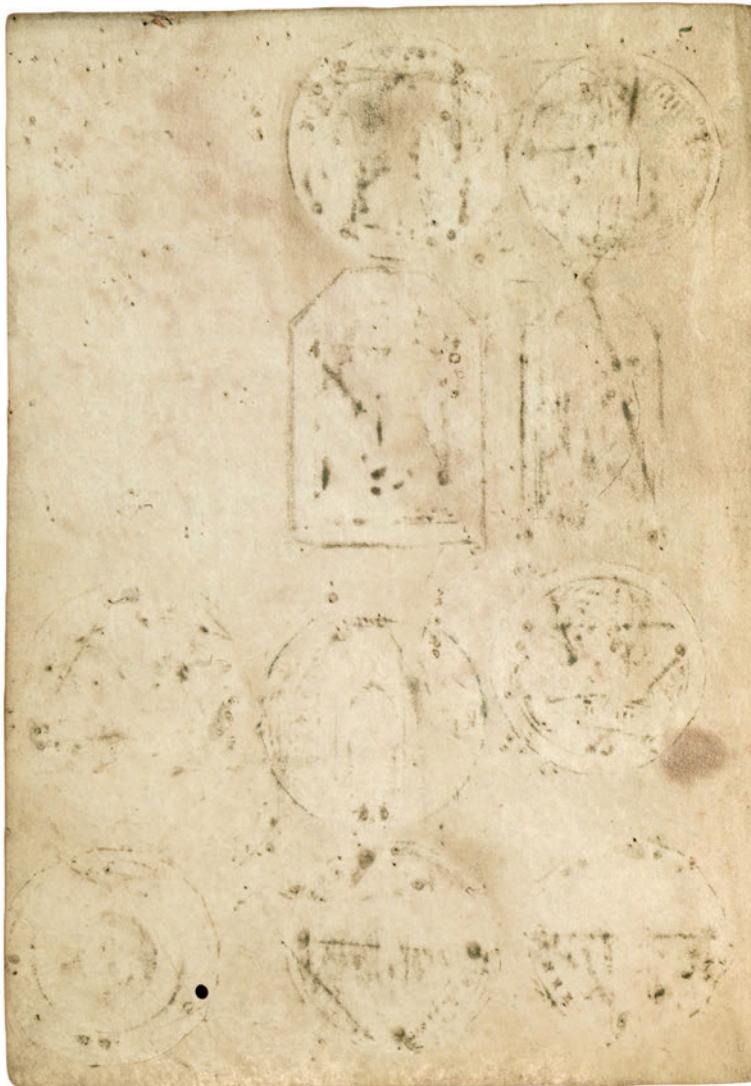
FIGURE 14.2   Blank flyleaf with partly readable impressions of badges from
                Einsiedeln (Engelweihe), Geraardsbergen (St Adrian), Le Puy
                (the Virgin), Saint-Quentin (St Quentin), and Amiens (St John
                the Baptist) among others, in a prayerbook, including the
                Hours of the Holy Cross (possibly Hainaut: ca. 1440). Baltimore,
                Walters Art Museum, MS W 218, fol. 6v. Image in the public
                domain

of St John the Baptist (possibly from Amiens). Most of these badges, though maybe not all of them, were bought at sites of pilgrimage.

Kathryn Rudy nuanced the general assumption that all badges in books were pilgrimage souvenirs. They are not. Some of them were badges with images that are not necessarily tied to a location, but depict widely venerated saints, for example Catherine, Barbara or Christopher, or generally known cults that were sometimes coupled with large indulgences, such as the Virgin in the sun and the Veronica.[7] These badges could be bought from local craftsmen or travelling merchants at sites of pilgrimage or at home, during fairs for example, and it is difficult to assert exactly when and where these badges would have been purchased because they do not bear a reference to a site of origin and could have been purchased anywhere.[8] With this nuance regarding the provenance of badges in mind, the conclusion must be that while most badges in books were pilgrims' souvenirs that can be tied to a specific location, some had images that are not connected to a localized cult. These latter badges depicted popular religious imagery and this justifies a reconsideration of badges as aids for mental pilgrimage.

2   The Book as Treasure Chest

Stamped badges differ from the traditional cast badges that had been produced from the twelfth century onwards, not so much in their imagery, but more so in their weight, shape and size.[9] Indicatively, after stamped badges were added to the supply of pilgrims' souvenirs on sites of pilgrimage, cast badges also remained on offer. In 1521, the church factory of Zoutleeuw, for example, ordered 1250 stamped latten badges, 450 stamped silver ones and 11 dozen cast badges

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7   Van Asperen H., "Où il y a une Veronique attachiée dedens: Images of the Veronica in Religious Books", in Murphy A. – Kessler H.L. (eds.), *The European Fortune of the Roman Veronica in the Middle Ages*, Convivium Supplementum 2 (Leiden: 2018) 232–249.

8   For example Kunera, Database of Medieval Badges and Ampullae, Radboud University Nijmegen /CKD, nos 14098 (cast badge of the Veronica), 16370 (cast badge of the Virgin on the crescent), and 16748 (cast badge of the Virgin in the sun), <http://www.kunera.nl> [consulted 2 December 2016].

9   The first mention of cast pilgrims' souvenirs seems to be that of Guernes de Pont-Ste-Maxence in his life of St Thomas Becket, completed in 1174. There, he writes about the ampullae of Canterbury, shells from Santiago and pewter badges from Rocamadour. For many examples of cast and stamped badges and to compare the two, see Kunera, <http://www.kunera.nl>.

to sell to pilgrims.[10] Both the cast and the stamped badges of Zoutleeuw had an image of St Leonard. Because of their specific qualities, the stamped badges facilitated different kinds of usage, for example, inclusion in manuscripts: the books kept these fragile images safe and, in turn, precisely because they are small (usually varying between 20 and 60 mm), thin and very lightweight, the badges did not damage the parchment pages. In fact, these stamped badges suited being put in books so well that it could be argued that they might have been introduced precisely for that purpose. They are not suitable for wearing on clothing because the flimsy metal damages easily. Stamped badges needed a specially produced frame if the owner wanted to attach them to a chain or a rosary, but they could be attached to books without any problem. The book kept these images safe, while the badges added value to the book.

Traces of these stamped badges appear almost exclusively in religious manuscripts for devotional use, often books of hours, and sometimes prayer books.[11] Most of the books with traces of these tiny badges were used often and intensively, as indicated by smudges, darkening of the pages, handwritten notes, added prayers, etc., and the books were mainly in the hands of a layperson at the time when the badges were added.[12] The observations that badges were (1) added to religious books, (2) that they belonged to lay owners and (3) that they were used intensively, seem to justify the conclusion that badges somehow shaped the daily devotional lives of the laity. The next question then focuses on their function. Why did laypeople add badges to their books? Is the location of the badges in the books indicative of the way they were used?

When adding religious badges, people principally looked for empty pages.[13] These could be blank folios between the written sections, but often they were the blank flyleaves in the front or back of the book [Figs 14.1, 14.2 and 14.3]. In particular, books that still have their original binding and flyleaves often reveal the former presence of badges. When old flyleaves are gone, the first folio of

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10   De Mecheleer, *Rekeningen* 336–339.

11   Asperen, *Pelgrimstekens op Perkament* 94–108.

12   Ibid.

13   To support the argument that some of these badges must be wafer souvenirs, Kathryn Rudy states that most of these badges were attached to the Hours of the Cross and the Penitential Psalms. As far as we know, most badges were attached to blank pages in books; see Asperen, *Pelgrimstekens op Perkament* 121–122. If the owners did seek a location next to a text they most often chose sections dedicated to the Virgin (Hours of the Virgin or popular prayers, especially the *Obsecro te*), not sacramental themes. Second, the surviving badges in books, as well as those impressions that can still be identified, indicate pilgrimage badges, not badges with sacramental themes. It would seem that the mere location of the badges is not sufficient to suggest that some were host souvenirs.

FIGURE 14.3   Blank flyleaf with impressions of unidentified badges in a book of hours
(Delft: ca. 1480–1500). The Hague, National Library of the Netherlands,
MS 132 G 38, front flyleaf. Image in the public domain

books of hours, usually the month of January of the eternal calendar, often reveals impressions of badges that were once sewn to the preceding flyleaf. Often books have been rebound, so flyleaves were removed, together with the badges. Sometimes owners added only one badge to a blank page, but numbers vary, and frequently people sewed in more than one badge.

In some cases, the badges are scattered over the page rather arbitrarily, suggesting that there was no plan, no careful arrangement. The owner of a Delft book of hours probably collected the badges over a longer period of time, adding the badges at the moment of purchase or whenever he or she received them [Fig. 14.3]. But usually the badges were carefully organized [Fig. 14.2].[14] Book owners seem to have collected the badges first – most likely over a longer period of time – before adding them. The badges were then arranged according to shape and size, sometimes even with regard to the material [Fig. 14.4]. In this last book of hours, possibly from Hainaut, the owner alternated copper and silver badges to create a colorful margin to the prime of the Hours of the Virgin. Here, it seems to be the arrangement of the material that mattered most.[15] The badges do not illustrate the texts, however. They were not attached next to the miniatures of the Virgin and St Claude. Instead, the owner chose to keep them together and attach them to a separate page as many book owners did [Fig. 14.1]. In this way, the badges frame the book as a whole.

It was the religious content of the book which made it an appropriate container for religious objects of personal value, on any page, just as a wooden chest or textile pouch could hold precious items. Charlotte of Savoye (1441–1483), wife of King Louis XI, owned such a purse 'of white and red satin with a bag of St James and mutiple lead badges inside'.[16] Another example is mentioned in an inventory of 1567 which attests that shoemaker Cornelis Jansz, also called Schroye, from Bergen op Zoom kept 'a box of various white badges and five gilt badges, a gilt medal and several other items' in his bedroom.[17] During

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14   Asperen, *Pelgrimstekens op Perkament* 121–126. Rudy also noted that all '[t]he badges were not, in other words, affixed haphazardly but with an end goal in mind.' Rudy, "Sewing the Body" 5.

15   This was also the case in Walters Art Museum, MS W 234, fol. 17v.

16   Inventory of Charlotte of Savoye of 1483: 'une bourse de satin blanc et roge en la quelle a dedans une gibecière de S. Jacques et plusieurs enseignes de plombs', as mentioned in Spencer B.W., *Pilgrim Souvenirs and Secular Badges*, Medieval Finds from Excavations in London 7 (London: 1998) 20; Gay V., *Glossaire Archéologique du Moyen-Âge et de la Renaissance*, vol. 1 (Paris: 1887) 635.

17   Enno van Gelder H.A., *Gegevens Betreffende Roerend en Onroerend Bezit in de Nederlanden in de 16e Eeuw* (The Hague: 1972–1973) 71, no. 177. 'een dooze met diversche witte teeckenen ende vijff vergulde teeckenen met eenen vergulden penninck ende andere cleynicheyt'.

FIGURE 14.4   Opening pages of prime of the Hours of the Virgin with impres-
                sions of silver and latten badges, in a book of hours (possibly
                Hainaut: fifteenth century). Bruges, Public Library 'De Biekorf',
                MS 329, fols. 61v–62r
                PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

private moments, the owner could open the chest, pouch or book to look at the badges and contemplate their images, perhaps combining contemplation with suitable prayers.

In her much cited works, Mary Carruthers has pointed out the metaphor of the *thesaurus* or *scrinium* to explain the working of memory.[18] Education, and especially the study of books, is the storage of knowledge. In the same way that an ark, a chest, and a library are all used to store manuscripts, the memory keeps and structures pictures and texts and the art of memory was a craft in which text and images played complementary and inseperable roles. In a sense, the shrine also became a metaphor for the book itself. As with memory, the book was considered something organic that was continuously re-modelled and re-sized to fit the devotional life of its owner better. Because of the associations of books with shrines of knowledge and knowledge with word and image, devotional books were easily turned into physical containers of prayers and religious pictures. Small two-dimensional items of devotional value, such as prayers, prints, drawings and badges, are then stored alongside other images and texts in the religious book. As a shrine or chest filled with religious treasure, continuously growing, the book was expanded and added to with religious text and religious images, both necessary elements for carefully shaping devotional lives.

The idea of the book as a repository of devotional objects – well-structured in the same way that knowledge should be stored in the memory in order to be retrievable[19] – was reiterated in Flemish books where illuminators painted trompe-l'oeil images of inserted badges [Fig. 14.5]. The painter did not just create the illusion of added badges; they also painted a wooden frame. These painted badges enhance the idea of the book as a cabinet, or shrine, for devotional items, where the badges are carefully arranged according to their shape and material. The arrangement reflects the idea of the border of alternating copper and silver badges in the margin of the pages for prime in the book of hours in Bruges [Fig. 14.4]. In the illusionistic margin, as in the Bruges book, gold alternates with silver, so that the badges create a decorative border for the miniature. The big difference is that the badges in the illusionistic margins were not personal: they stemmed from the model leaves of the illuminator, and were used and re-used in books for different audiences. The badge motifs therefore reflect the types of badges that would have circulated in the orbit

18   Carruthers M., *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge – New York: 1992) 37–55, esp. 47.

19   Carruthers, *The Book of Memory* 56.

FIGURE 14.5   Master of the Musgrave Hours, *Adoration of the Magi*, surrounded by a badge
border, in a book of hours for the Use of Rome, Flemish (possibly Bruges:
ca. 1500–1525). The Hague, Museum Meermanno | House of the Book,
MS 10 E 3, fol. 90v. Image in the public domain

of the illuminator rather than a choice of the future book owner, or even the book's intended destination. Nevertheless, the illusionistic wooden frame with the 'inserted' badges embroiders on the same associations that made devotees attach badges in the first place: the concept of the book as *thesaurus*.

In contrast to the illusionistic badge border, an owner could use badges to add a section of personal devotion to the otherwise often standard book of hours. Although it is beautifully designed, the printed book of hours with badges of Le Puy and Saint-Claude [Fig. 14.1] is the product of serial production for a wide, though well-off, audience. The printed parts of the book make no reference to the intended owner, but simply contain the standard elements such as an almanac, the Gospel extracts, the Hours of the Virgin, of the Cross, and of the Holy Spirit, the Penitential Psalms, the Office of the Dead and popular prayers to the Virgin and the saints. To customize this luxurious, but standard book, the owner added a personal quire of handwritten prayers and miniatures after the book's production was completed around 1515 (Appendix). He had it made to order. The owner, dressed in the tunic of Chilly, kneels in one of the miniatures where he is presented to the Virgin by Cardinal Louis Allemand who had died in 1450 [Fig. 14.6]. The coat of arms of Allemand is prominently included in a miniature of the coats of arms of De Chilly's family's ancestry (fol. 3r), so he was probably related and this would explain the prominent inclusion of the *beatus* who would not make it to sainthood. Allemand was never sanctified. It seems that the quire was added shortly before or shortly after the beatification in 1527. This highly personal, custom-made section contains a few prayers, all dedicated to the Virgin, St Claude or Louis Allemand. Clearly these pilgrims' badges suited the owner's personal devotional preferences for the Virgin and St Claude which are attested to in the first quire of the book.

3   An Instrument of Mental Pilgrimage?

When badges are still present, as in the book of De Chilly, it becomes clear that the empty pages of books were turned into veritable devotional panels or diptychs that were geared to personal preferences. Were these badges used to make the act of remembering a former pilgrimage into a personal devotional exercise? While this is surely in the realm of possibility, we need to make one clarification: the owner of the book was not necessarily the same person as the pilgrim who had taken the badges home. Badges were often used as gifts. The accounts of highly-placed persons mention badges being distributed among people of the household. Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy bought badges 'to

FIGURE 14.6   Miniatures of the Virgin and Child and a knight of Chilly, probably a member
               of the Du Tartre family, presented by Louis Allemand, a printed book of hours
               (Paris, Egidius Hardouin: ca. 1515–1530). Chantilly, Musée Condé, Impr. XVI C.3,
               fols. 4v–5r
               PHOTO © CNRS – IRHT (INSTITUT DE RECHERCHE ET D'HISTOIRE DES
               TEXTES)

distribute among the people of his household'.[20] He used these to accentuate the established hierarchy at court. In 1420–21, he bought badges of the Virgin of Boulogne, some gilt and others plain silver, for his wife, for the knights, esquires, and officers of his court, and for the women in his wife's entourage.[21] In 1451, René of Anjou bought large golden (or more probably gilt) badges of St Catherine of Fierbois from goldsmith Jean Juliot for himself, his wife and his daughter Yolande, small golden ones for the chamberlains, large silver ones for the 'gentilzhommes and demoiselles' and small ones for the officers.[22] These gifts, which were an important part of court culture, served different purposes.[23] They compelled gratitude and loyalty. Moreover, they were intended to tie subjects to their lord. The accounts of Burgundy and Anjou also demonstrate that badges were used as gifts for close relatives: during the 1450s, Duke Philip bought one golden badge of St Catherine of Fierbois 'par lui achettée pour madicte dame [his wife]'.[24]

Similar documents recounting the distribution of badges to family members do not exist for people of lower status, but pilgrims of more modest means could also buy badges, although obviously not the expensive gilt ones. The accounts of pilgrimage churches mention badges of different value to suit all purses, large and small, from expensive silver, or silver gilt, to cheap latten ones.[25] They were tokens of affection. The giver wanted to show where he or she had been, and hoped that the badge would keep loved ones safe. After being passed on to others, they continued to function as charms and instruments of devotion. Given that some badges were gifts before insertion into a book, and the subsequent conclusion that a book owner was not necessarily the pilgrim, the badge could not always have been used to meditate on a completed physical pilgrimage.

An exercise of *mental* pilgrimage does not imply the memory of a *physical* pilgrimage. As a devotional exercise, a mental pilgrimage could take many shapes and forms depending on the devotee's aspirations and desires, and the opportunities open to them. Time-consuming and detailed versions involved

20   De Laborde L., *Les Ducs de Bourgogne. Études sur les Lettres, les Arts et l'Industrie pendant le XVe Siècle et plus particulièrement dans les Pays-Bas et le Duché de Bourgogne*, vol. 2, part 2 (Paris: 1851) 386–387.

21   De Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, vol. 2, part 1 (Paris: 1849) 181, no. 5.

22   Arnaud D'Agnel G., *Comptes du Roi René* (Paris: 1910) 286, no. 853.

23   Perkinson S., "Likeness, Loyalty, and the Life of the Court Artist: Portraiture in the Calendar Scenes of the Très Riches Heures", in Dückers R. – Roelofs P. (eds.), *The Limbourg Brothers: Reflections on the Origins and the Legacy of Three Illuminators from Nijmegen* (Leiden: 2009).

24   De Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, vol. 2, part 3 (Paris: 1852) 354, no. 6737.

25   Cf. De Mecheleer, *Rekeningen*; Vorsterman van Oyen, *Het Archief* 68–70.

a mental journey through different sites. These mental 'journeys' usually focused on Rome or Jerusalem. There are examples of cloistered women walking through the convent imagining Christ's Passion.[26] Each distance covered would involve as many steps as Christ took on his way to Calvary. Different locations within the convent were mentally transformed into significant sites in biblical Jerusalem. In other versions of mental pilgrimage, steps were replaced with prayers, and the devotee would say as many prayers as the pilgrim would have taken steps.

These exercises of mental pilgrimage were popular with cloistered men and women, but the exercises were not necessarily restricted to convents.[27] Although there are exceptions, many lay people might have preferred less time-consuming versions and another form of mental pilgrimage did not focus on the journey, but on the destination. For this reason, some people added prayers explicitly addressed to cult images to their books so that they could profit from the salvific dynamics of the cult statue without leaving the house. No journey, physical or mental, was needed, just a relocation in the mind. A prayer by Guillaume Alexis, or related versions, was associated with the image of the Virgin of Le Puy. The devotee addresses the Queen of Heaven who is 'seated up there on a divine throne in this present church [...] I have come to you this morning as your pilgrim, with bowed head. Humbly I offer you my body and my soul, so that at my end [sc. at the end of my life] you would like to be present'.[28] The pilgrimage – although it is an imaginary one – is used to

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26   There is a whole body of texts on mental pilgrimage in convents. A selection: Rudy K.M., *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent: Imagining Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: 2011); Asperen H. van, "'As If They Had Physically Visited the Holy Places': Two Sixteenth-Century Manuscripts Guide a Mental Journey through Jerusalem (Nijmegen University Library, Mss 205 and 233)", in Goudeau J. – Verhoeven M. – Weijers W. (eds.), *The Imagined and Real Jerusalem in Art and Architecture* (Leiden: 2014) 190–214; Beebe K., "Reading Mental Pilgrimage in Context: The Imaginary Pilgrims and Real Travels of Felix Fabri's 'Die Sionpilger'", *Essays in Medieval Studies* 25 (2008) 39–70; Ehrenschwendtner M.-L., "Virtual Pilgrimages? Enclosure and the Practice of Piety at St Katherine's Convent, Augsburg", *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 60, 1 (2009) 45–73.

27   Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages* 240–252; Rudy K.M., "A Guide to Mental Pilgrimage: Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal Ms. 212", *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 64, 6 (2000) 494–515.

28   Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Latin 1370, fol. 39v: 'O Royne qui fustes mise, Et assise, Lassus ou [*sic*] throne diuine En ceste presente eglise Sans faintise. Suys venu a ce matin Comme vostre pelerin. Chef enclin Humblement je vous presente, Mon corps et mon ame [40r] a fin, Qua ma fin Vous veuillez estre presente.' Cf. Reinburg V., "Hearing Lay People's Prayer", in Diefendorf B.D. – Hesse C. (eds.), *Culture and Identity in Early Modern Europe (1500–1800): Essays in Honor of Natalie Zemon Davis* (Ann Arbor: 1993) 20–40, here 27.

prefigure a visit by the Virgin to the pilgrim in the hour of death. According to the prayer text, the devotee is a pilgrim. In a book of hours, the owner coupled this prayer with a miniature of the black Virgin of Le Puy to make it easier for devotees to picture themselves in front of the statue.[29]

Since the badge represented the cult image at the cult site, the devotee could theoretically use the badge to mentally visit that place, whether they had been there themselves or not. For those devotees who could not afford a personalized book, pilgrims' badges might have been an easy way to add a focus on a cult image to their standard books. If the badges were used to address a cult statue, a contemplation of the image was most likely accompanied by a prayer. Thus, if badges were attached next to a suitable text, mental exercise may have been a motive for the book owner.

4   Badges as Bookmarks

Some pilgrims' badges might have been coupled with prayer in order to perform an exercise of mental relocation, but this does not mean every pilgrims' badge, even those placed next to religious texts, had such a purpose. As stated above, often badges have no direct connection with the text that they accompany. In a book that was produced in the east of the Netherlands [Fig. 14.7], four badges were attached in different places within the book. There are traces of one – sewing holes, impressions of relief with metal residue – at the beginning of the popular Hours of the Virgin, at the Hours of the Cross, of the Holy Spirit and the Office of the Dead. Two impressions are unrecognizable. The circular badge that marked the beginning of the Office of the Dead possibly depicted the Virgin. Another circular badge depicted St Quirin, and came from Neuss. Placed on the page immediately preceding the Hours of the Holy Spirit, there seems to be no intended link between the image or the badge's provenance and the text.

All badges are in the outer margin against the edge of the book. More importantly, they were all placed on the verso of an opening with a new *incipit*. If the user of the book picked up the unfoliated or unpaginated book, the badges would have served as visible and perceptible bookmarks. A mark on the left-hand side of the book would have suited the dextral devotee who would use

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29   On a prayer book with an image of, and a prayer to the Virgin of Le Puy, see Reinburg V., *French Books of Hours: Making an Archive of Prayer, c. 1400–1600* (Cambridge: 2012) 229–235.
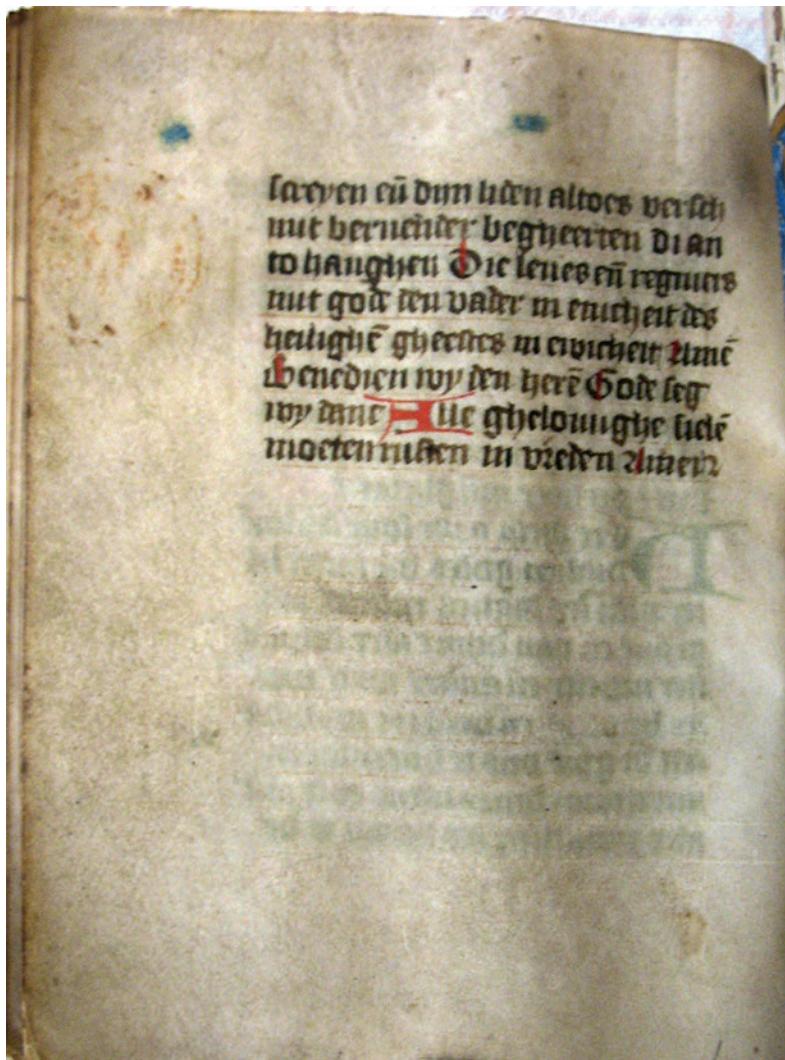
FIGURE 14.7   Opening page of the Hours of the Holy Spirit with the impression of
               a badge from Neuss (St Quirin) in a book of hours (probably IJssel
               area: ca. 1460–1485). Arnhem, Erfgoedcentrum Rozet, MS GM 2037,
               fol. 76v
               PHOTO BY THE AUTHOR

the left hand to leaf through the pages. In this book, it seems that the badges were used to mark favourite and much-used passages. Notably, badges were not placed next to the Penitential Psalms nor the Hours of Eternal Wisdom, indicating that these were used less, or were less popular, with this book owner.

Other owners had different preferences. In another book, equally sparsely decorated, (British Library, Arundel MS 294), the owner marked only the Hours of Eternal Wisdom with a badge, leaving all the other book sections unmarked.[30] In a book of hours in Dutch (The Hague, National Library of the Netherlands, MS 135 E 22) the owner attached badges to the opening of the Hours of the Cross and to the prayer to the seventy-two names of the Virgin. In another book in Nijmegen University Library (MS 320) the owner had very specific intentions. They added badges to the sext of the Hours of Christ's Passion and of the House of the Virgin, and to the prime and none of the Hours of the Virgin, which seems in line with the idea that not every lay devotee had the time to read all the hours, but made a selection of hours that suited their schedule.[31] Badges in the right places, adding relief and visual contrast to the page, helped to retrieve those selected passages when needed.

In a book of hours for the Use of Paris, the so-called 'Heures de Charles VIII', the owner added a round badge of Le Puy.[32] The badge was added to the lower margin of folio 32v. The page still shows the sewing holes for the badge. The offset of the obverse on the following page [Fig. 14.8] shows the oblong lines of the narrow canopy, called the *chadaraïta*, that was placed over the miraculous statue of the black Virgin in Le Puy. A comparison with the badge of Le Puy in the printed book of hours reveals the similarities [Fig. 14.1].[33] The impression in the lower margin was left by a round badge that has the same narrow canopy that characterizes badges from Le Puy as the one in the printed hours. The badge, now gone, marked the *incipit* page (i.e. the page with the opening line) of the prayer *Je te salve madame saincte marie*. Significantly, the prayer of Guillaume Alexis, usually associated with the Virgin of Le Puy, starts on

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30   British Library, Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, URL: <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts> [accessed 4 August 2015].

31   Pantin W.A., "Instructions for a Devout and Literate Layman", in Alexander J.J.G. – Gibson M.T. (eds.), *Medieval Learning and Literature: Essays Presented to Richard William Hurt* (Oxford: 1976) 398–422, here 179; Brereton G.E. – Ferrier J.M., *Le Menagier de Paris* (Oxford: 1981) 6–9; Oosterman J.B., *De Gratie van het Gebed: Overlevering en Functie van Middelnederlandse Berijmde Gebeden*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: 1995).

32   For the digitized version of this manuscript, see BnF Gallica, <http://gallica.bnf.fr> [accessed 17 June 2016].

33   Barral i Altet X. (ed.), *La Cathédrale du Puy-en-Velay* (Paris: 2000) 134–135.
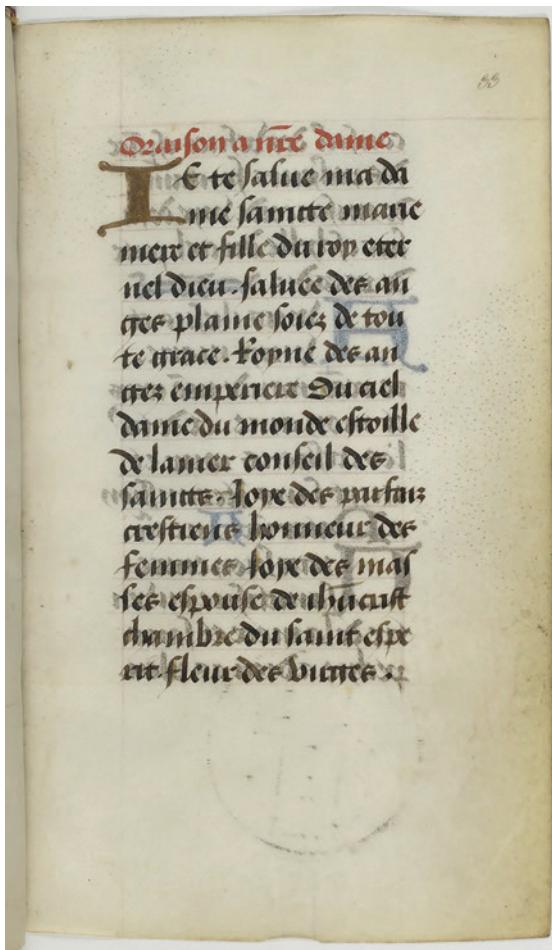
FIGURE 14.8   Page with *Je te salve* and impression of a
badge of Le Puy in a book of hours for the
Use of Paris, called 'Heures de Charles VIII',
with a calendar for Tours (ca. 1475–1500).
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France,
MS Latin 1370, fol. 33r. Source gallica.bnf.fr /
Bibliothèque nationale de France

folio 39v, but the book owner did not choose the margin of this *incipit* page on
which to place the badge of Le Puy. The badge of the Virgin fits the prayer *Je te
salve* where the Virgin is greeted as 'mother and daughter of the eternal king',
'queen of the angels', 'empress of heaven', and 'lady of the world'. The badge
depicts her as a mother and as a queen enthroned. Further on, the devotee
focuses on the Virgin and her Son who is also depicted on the badge.

Notably, the book owner also established a link between badges and the text that occurs later in the book. Five diamond-shaped badges, reminiscent of the surviving badges of Thomas Becket of Canterbury, have left impressions on the page preceding the prayer to Thomas of Canterbury (fol. 214v).[34] The badges were not attached to this page. They have also left impressions on the page with the prayer (fol. 215r). There, the devotee implores 'God for whose church the glorious pontiff Thomas fell dead through the sword of the impious'.[35] It seems that the badges were attached to a separate piece of parchment that was added between folios 214 and 215.

The badges brought into relief the texts that have no miniatures. The prayer to the Virgin has no differentiating rubric. Both the *Je te salve* and the *Royne qui fustes mise* are introduced by the words 'Oraison a nre dame' [Prayer to Our Lady], making no distinction between the two. Nothing sets these prayers apart to make it easier for the book owner to retrieve one or other of them. The badge made a difference. In line with the enormous popularity of the Virgin, prayers to the Virgin were the most popular passages to attach badges to. Traces of badges often appear next to the opening lines of the *Obsecro Te* to be found in many religious books for laypeople, and next to other prayers dedicated to the Virgin.[36] The most prominent section dedicated to the Virgin in a book of hours was the Hours of the Virgin,[37] and not surprisingly, badges were often added to the opening of this section. The Hours of the Cross were also popular,

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34   Kunera, nos. 03114, and 09315 <http://www.kunera.nl> [consulted 20 June 2016].

35   Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS. Latin 1370, fol. 215r: 'Deus pro cuius ecclesia gloriosus pontifex thomas gladijs impiorum occubuit […]'.

36   Examples of manuscripts with badges next to prayers to the Virgin: Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, MS 262, fol. 132v; Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, MSS 8645, fol. 71v; MS.11 035-37, fol. 87v and IV 1096, fol. 31r; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 51, fol. 59r; *Olim* Christie's, 4 June 2008, Lot 47, fol. 20v; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Latin 1370, fol. 32v; The Hague, National Library of the Netherlands, MS 132 G 38, fol. 124v; Utrecht, Museum Catharijneconvent, MS ABM h23, fols. 52v–53r.

37   Manuscripts with badges next to the Hours of the Virgin: Arnhem, Erfgoedcentrum De Rozet, MS GM 2037, fol. 12v; Baltimore, Walters Art Museum, MS W 782, (folio preceding) fol. 14v; Cologne, Diözesan- und Dommuseum, MS 1576, fol. 28v; Ghent University Library, MS BHSL.HS.2750, fol. 28v; Nijmegen, Radboud University Library, MSS 203, fol. 5v, 283, fol. 8r, and 320, fols. 44v and 54v; *Olim* London, Christie's, 24 November 2007, Lot 10, fol. 12v; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Nouvelle Acquisition Latin 3213, fol. 18v; Utrecht, Museum Catharijneconvent, MS BMH h63, fol. 16v. Kathryn Rudy also concluded that the Hours of the Virgin were popular for the inclusion of badges. She argued, however, that the badges sewn to the Hours of the Virgin must have been Eucharistic wafer souvenirs because of the association of this text with the Incarnation. Rudy, "Sewing the Body" section C.

although less so than the Hours of the Virgin.[38] Some of the badges might have had an image that suited the text, but this was not necessarily the case. Badges with other religious images could suit the purpose of place marker just as well. Any religious badge sufficed, whether it was a pilgrims' badge or not, a souvenir of the book owner's own pilgrimage, or a gift.

5   Storing the Badge, Shaping the Book

It is clear that several false premises have obscured the study of badges in books. Firstly, although most badges in books are pilgrimage souvenirs, not all of them are. Some were not connected with a pilgrimage, but were religious medals. Secondly, the badges in books were not necessarily attached by the pilgrim: they were often given away as tokens of affection. And thirdly, their place in the book is often not indicative of their provenance or image. Although sometimes people did position a badge next to a relevant text or image, their place in the book should never be used to identify a missing badge. Hypothesizing about the use of badges as instruments for mental pilgrimage is justifiable, but caution is necessary when it comes to books where impressions are unclear. Placement next to a prayer to the Virgin does not imply that the badge was a pilgrimage souvenir. Equally, location next to a communion prayer does not imply an image of the host.

Although some laypeople might have used their (pilgrims') badges for mental pilgrimage, or – more specifically – for prayer in front of a cult image, not all of the badges functioned in this way. First of all, pilgrimage badges remained inextricably connected with the place of pilgrimage. They provided devotees with a cult image – a reliquary, a miracle-working statue or icon – connected with a specific site, and these badges could in theory be used to address the cult image in prayer if the devotee was not present at the cult site. While devotees prayed before the image at home they could mentally place themselves

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38   Examples of manuscripts with badges attached to the Hours of the Cross include Arnhem, Erfgoedcentrum Rozet, MS GM 2037, fol. 53v; Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, MS 10 541, fols. 10v and 13v; Ghent, University Library, MS BHSL.HS.2750, fol. 20v; Nijmegen, Radboud University Library, MS 203, fol. 55v; The Hague, National Library of the Netherlands, MSS 135 E 22, fol. 103v, and BPH 137, fol. 13v; Utrecht, University Library, MS 15.C.9, fol. 91r. Rudy, "Sewing the Body" section B. Significantly, in most of these books the owner also added badges to another passage dedicated to the Virgin. Cf. previous notes.

in front of the venerated image at the cult site. Religious medals that do not depict a cult image and that cannot be connected to a site of pilgrimage could not be used for mental pilgrimage in the same way. They also depict a saint or the Virgin, but are not connected with a place. Secondly, badges, both religious badges and pilgrims' souvenirs, were frequently used as bookmarks to identify favourite passages, so when a badge marks a text this does not necessarily mean it was used as an instrument for mental pilgrimage.

These comments aside, badges still reveal much about the devotional activities of the book owner. Badges differ from other additions to books, such as prints and small drawings, because they added relief to the pages. Even if the badges have left unrecognizable impressions, they can still be recognized as traces of medals. It is often only these remaining traces on the pages that reveal that the book owners had carefully assigned a place to their badges. These imprints, adhesive residue and needle holes indicate that different devotees used their badges to stress that their book was important to them. Badges were attached to blank pages to add devotional content, often of a very personal nature as the printed Paris hours indicated. Sometimes, badges were added to pages of text to accentuate and mark favourite passages. They indicate how books were used and which texts were the owner's favourites.

From the badge traces it becomes clear, as Rudy has noted, that devotees did not read these books from A to Z, but used some parts more extensively then others. Owners did not read the prayers at each liturgical hour of the day, but fell back on familiar prayers at one or two particular moments of the day. People had religious routines which depended largely on personal preferences and could vary significantly from one person to another. After their attachment, the religious badges became intricate and essential parts of the religious manuscript that developed, almost organically, into a shrine of personal devotion, at least for the owner who attached them. The religious manuscript for devotional use was never something fixed or finished; it was dynamic and flexible as memory that could slowly but surely be filled with knowledge. Books often remained in use and continued to be adapted and expanded after the book had been donated or bequeathed to family members, but badges were eventually removed from the pages, whether because attitudes towards pilgrimage and veneration of saints had changed during the Reformation, because their significance had been lost to later owners or because they came to be regarded as improper additions to the book. Even in their absence, the objects disclose the ways in which devotees carefully shaped their devotional lives.

6 Appendix

Structure of the first quire in Chantilly, Impr XIV C.3 (fols. 1–8)

Folios	Text and miniatures	Additions
1ʳ–2ᵛ	Blank	badges of the Virgin and St Claude on fol. 1v
3r	Full-page miniature: **Coats of arms**	
3v	Blank	
4r	Full-page miniature: **Coats of arms**	
4v	Full-page miniature: **The Virgin and Child with coat of arms of Chilly**	
5r	Full-page miniature: **Louis Allemand presents male devotee wearing tunic of Chilly**	
5v–6r	Prayers to Louis Allemand	
6v	Blank	
7r	Full-page miniature: **St Claude**	
7v–8r	Prayers to St Claude	
8v	Blank	

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PART 6

Gendering Devotion

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Living Spaces, Communal Places: Early Modern Jewish Homes and Religious Devotions

Debra Kaplan

In* the seventeenth century, Juspe Schammes, the sexton of the Worms syna-gogue, composed a book documenting the various customs of his community, including the details of the synagogue service. On the days when the Torah was read aloud in the synagogue, a set number of men from the community were individually called up by name. Once called up, the man would recite a blessing over the Torah, and remain present next to the Torah scroll at the centre of the synagogue as a section was read aloud. The custom book includes a section listing the occasions on which specific male members of the com-munity were honoured with being called up to the Torah. Communal officials, for example, were honoured with being called to the Torah on particular dates, while other community members celebrating life-cycle events such as mar-riage or the anniversary of a close relative's death were called to the Torah on the relevant dates. Included in this list of honourees was a man who moved into a new house.[1] This same practice was also observed in Frankfurt am Main, as is reported in the eighteenth-century custom book *Minhag ka-tzon Yosef.* The author records that: 'According to the custom in the holy community of Frankfurt, anyone who moves to a different house is obligated [to be called to the Torah] on the first Sabbath [after the move]'.[2] This honour may have had roots in the Bible, which exempted a man who had moved into a new home and had not yet dedicated it from serving as a soldier in wartime.[3] Nevertheless, the early modern practice demonstrates that moving into a new home was actively considered a momentous event marked by a sacred ritual.

This ritual was a public performance that acknowledged a change in domes-tic life in the space of the larger community. It underscores that rather than constituting two discrete categories, domestic and communal places over-lapped, with religious devotion playing a role in both. Being called to the Torah

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1 Schammes J., *Customs of the Holy Community of Worms*, ed. B.S. Hamburger and E. Zimmer, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: 1988) vol. 1, no. 38.

2 Kosman Joseph, *Noheg ka-tzon Yosef* (Hanau, Jacob Bassange: 1718) 138.

3 Deuteronomy 20:5.

in the public space of the synagogue because one had moved into a new home bridged the space of home with the space of the community.

It is perhaps not at all surprising that the home was connected to both religion and to communal rituals among Jews in early modern Europe. After all, the home was not really a private place. In early modern Europe, for both Jews and Christians, the home was both a domicile as well as a place of work. As Lyndal Roper has demonstrated in her work on Protestant families, the ideal holy family represented a harmony of social, economic, and moral order in the space of the household workshop.[4] If we consider that the space of the early modern home was multi-use – it was a space in which work and chores, religious practice, child rearing, and hospitality took place – we can more easily understand the deep connections between work, household duties, and religious devotion.

This article explores how Jews expressed religious devotion at home, in consideration of the various different uses of early modern homes. Rituals were performed in domestic spaces, both chores and work were sometimes infused with religious meaning and significance, and private and communal sacred space was sometimes designated within the home. The approach of looking at religious devotion through the lens of the domestic sphere enables us to see how intrinsic religious meaning was to a very broad set of behaviours, including mundane practices. Moreover, by examining the intersections between the home and religious devotion in its myriad forms, scholars are able to uncover the religious experiences of Jewish women and to understand the ways in which religious devotion was often gendered.

1   Jewish Homes and Domestic Devotion

Although Roper's work on the Protestant family serves as a model for studying religion, the domestic sphere and gender, there is an important distinction between early modern Protestant and Jewish practices. The connection between the Jewish home and the sacred is not at all surprising, given that

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4   Roper L., *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg* (Oxford: 1989) 252. See also Wunder H., *He is the Sun: She is the Moon: Women in Early Modern Germany*, trans. T. Dunlap (Cambridge, MA: 1998). This approach indicates that the distinction between public and private places was not as sharp in the early modern period. On this point see Ulbrich C., *Shulamit and Margarete: Power, Gender, and Religion in a Rural Society in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, trans. T. Dunlap (Leiden: 2004) 4–14; Bock G., "Challenging Dichotomies: Perspectives on Women's History," in Offen K. – Pierson R.R. – Rendall J. (eds.), *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives* (London: 1991) 1–23.

FIGURE 15.1   *Book of Customs* (*Sefer Minhagim*) (Venice, Giovanni di Gara: 1593). The
                Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford, Opp.4° 1006, fol. 19r. Cleaning
                the home for Passover

many daily Jewish commandments were designed to regulate domestic spaces.
For example, Jewish dietary laws required the separation of milk and meat,
and included food restrictions on Passover, which involved removing leavened
products from the domestic sphere. In an Italian woodcut from 1600, various
family members are depicted conducting the search for leavened grains on the
eve of Passover in their home [Fig. 15.1].[5] Such laws regulating food were all

5   On the 1593 customs book in which this illustration appears, see Feuchtwanger-Sarig N.,
    "How Italian are the Venice 'Minhagim' of 1593? A Chapter in the History of Yiddish Printing
    in Italy", in Graetz M. (ed.), *Schöpferische Momente des europäischen Judentums in der frühen
    Neuzeit* (Hamburg: 2000) 177–205.

practised in the home. In fact, rabbinic responsa dealt explicitly with Jewish law, food, and the home. In one example, the sixteenth-century Polish rabbi Benjamin Slonik was asked if it was permissible to soak and salt meat – a practice done to remove the blood from the meat, necessary to render the meat kosher – in the utensil of a non-Jew in a case in which when a Jew lodged in a non-Jew's home and had no kosher utensil.[6] Here, being outside the space of one's home raised questions about how to perform a normative ritual practice – a fact that underscores the extent to which one's home, and its objects and cooking utensils were part and parcel of the observance of daily dietary commandments.

Both texts and illustrations printed in early modern custom books depict the centrality of the home as the locus in which certain rituals were performed.[7] Woodcuts from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italian custom books, like the one mentioned above, portray various religious rituals in domestic spaces. These include, for example, a woman blessing Sabbath candles, a weekly ritual that marked the onset of the Sabbath on Friday evening [Fig. 15.2]. It is not incidental that women are present in these two images, and in others like them. Since they were often present and active in domestic spaces, they participated in rituals that took place in the home. It should be noted that in the two aforementioned images, the women were active participants.[8] In other rituals, such as the *havdalah* ceremony, which marked the conclusion of the Sabbath, women were less active than their male counterparts. During the ceremony, biblical verses and blessings over wine, aromatic spices, and a candle forged of at least two wicks were recited. In this scene, as depicted in an Italian custom book from 1600, the father holds the wine glass and recites the prayer, while his sons respectively hold the candle and the spice container. The mother of the family and one of the sons are lifting their hands to the light, as was customary during the ceremony [Fig. 15.3]. The two daughters, though present at the ritual, are depicted as passive participants.

While the aforementioned rituals were all performed at home by design, in pre-modern times, additional rituals were at times celebrated in the home

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6   Slonik Benjamin, *She'elot u-teshuvot masa'at Binyamin* (Krakow, Meisels: 1632) no. 30.

7   On early modern custom books, see Baumgarten J., "Prayer, Ritual, and Practice in Ashkenazic Jewish Society: The Tradition of Yiddish Custom Books in the Fifteenth through Eighteenth Centuries", *Studia Rosenthaliana* 36 (2002–3) 121–46.

8   Other examples of active female participation in rituals in the home include birth and post-partum rituals. See Sabar S., "Childbirth and Magic: Jewish Folklore and Material Culture", in Biale D. (ed.), *Cultures of the Jews: A New History* (New York: 2002) 671–722. See specifically his discussion of the popular use of the Torah scroll. See also Baumgarten E., *Mothers and Children: Jewish Family Life in Medieval Europe* (Princeton: 2004) 99–116.

FIGURE 15.2   *Book of Customs* (*Sefer Minhagim*) (Venice, Giovanni di Gara: 1600). The
Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford, Opp. 4° 1004, fol. 39v. Kindling
Sabbath Candles

FIGURE 15.3   *Book of Customs* (*Sefer Minhagim*) (Venice, Giovanni di Gara: 1600).
The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford, Opp. 4° 1004, fol. 63v.
Havdalah ceremony at the conclusion of the Sabbath

Book of Customs (*Sefer Minhagim*) (Venice, Giovanni di Gara: 1600).
                     The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford, Opp. 4° 1004, fol. 90v.
                     Circumcision

rather than in the synagogue. The circumcision ceremony, for example, was sometimes practised in the space of the home, as portrayed in the Italian custom book from 1600.[9] Here too, a woman is present, albeit in a passive role [Fig. 15.4].

Considering the space of the home and the devotions that were performed there allows us to glimpse Jewish women's piety. Unlike Catholic women who could opt to become nuns or to serve as pious women in lay institutions, Jewish women, like their Protestant counterparts, were expected to marry, have children, and to experience fulfilment, religious and otherwise, in the role of mother and wife.[10] Though women were often present in the synagogue, men played the central role in public rituals. The establishment of different norms for men and women also led to gendered forms of piety.

A comparison of men and women's charitable activities provides a vivid example. Both men and women were expected to donate to the poor, although Jewish scholars debated the degree of autonomy that married women had in

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9   Baumgarten, *Mothers and Children* 55–89.

10   I am in no way suggesting that all Catholic women who entered the nunnery did so by choice. Jewish women, however, did not have any comparable option.

donating from joint assets.[11] Sources describe women as giving or collecting food items for the poor, whereas much of male charitable giving took place in the synagogue.[12] While men donated to charity after being honoured as participants during the synagogue service, women tended to be involved in more intimate forms of feeding the poor.[13] This included the system known as *pletten*, under which poor individuals drew lottery tickets assigning them to eat a meal in a particular household. Though each family was required to host the poor, the women were those most intimately involved with hospitality, cooking and feeding.[14]

The crypto-Jewish women of the Iberian Peninsula provide another example of women's participation in domestic devotion.[15] After the establishment of the Inquisition in late fifteenth-century Spain, crypto-Jews, who were outwardly Christian but who observed Judaism in secret, only practised Judaism in domestic spaces where they could hide these practices. As Reneé Levine-Melammed has shown, observance of Jewish tradition after that point includes preparing meat in a particular manner, lighting Sabbath candles, fasting, changing linen and washing oneself before the Sabbath. Moreover, once Jewish practice was confined to domestic spaces, women emerged as the leaders of crypto-Jewish communities, who passed on traditions to the next generation.

2　　The Home, Women's Work, and Devotion

In the case of crypto-Judaism, religious practice was limited to domestic spaces, while in normative Jewish communities, religious practices took place both in the home and in communal spaces such as synagogues, hospices, and cemeteries. At the same time, the devotional aspects of the domestic activities

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11　　Gray A., "Married Women and Tsedaqah in Medieval Jewish Law: Gender and the Discourse of Legal Obligation", *Jewish Law Association Studies* 18 (2007) 168–212.

12　　Chovav Y., *Maidens Love Thee: The Religious and Spiritual Life of Jewish Ashkenazic Women in the Early Modern Period* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: 2009) 388.

13　　Men donated to charity after having been honoured in the synagogue. The association between the home and women's charity is already referenced in the Talmud. See Babylonian Talmud Tractate *Ta'anit* 23b. Juspe Schammes borrows the Talmudic phrase when describing female charitable giving. See Schammes, *Customs* vol. 2, 145.

14　　Berkovitz J.R., "Jewish Philanthropy in Early Modern and Modern Europe: Theory and Practice in Historical Perspective", in Prager Y. (ed.), *Toward a Renewed Ethic of Jewish Philanthropy* (New York: 2010) 98–99.

15　　Levine-Melammed R., *Heretics or Daughters of Israel? The Crypto-Jewish Women of Castile* (Oxford: 2002).

performed by crypto-Jews were also common in more normative Jewish communities, where household chores were often seen as having religious significance, particularly for women.

This perception is reflected in the sixteenth-century text, *Meneket Rivka*, the first Yiddish morality text written by a woman. Its author, Rivka Tiktiner, composed this treatise to preach proper behaviour to women. In it, she notes that, 'A woman should also be cautious with and pay attention to the cleanliness of her house, particularly where one prays, or religious books are, or near the *mezuzah*'.[16] This passage raises two different aspects of domestic devotion. First, Tiktiner suggests that household cleaning had a moral value; second, she mentions the creation of sacred spaces inside the Jewish home. Each will be dealt with in turn.

Let us first look at the religious import that Tiktiner ascribes to cleaning, seen also in a separate passage of the text, in which she discusses women who took on students as boarders:

> There are also some [undutiful] cooks who do not fear God, and become angry if a religious book is lying on the table, and say, "I have cleaned up here, and now you are putting books on the table!" But if she puts her children bare-naked on the table and they urinate on it, this filth means nothing to her. It is a great sin, and is a danger to the child.[17]

Not only does Tiktiner advocate keeping a clean house, but she continues by stressing the various religious rewards one is granted for treating Torah scholars with respect:[18]

> Even a cook should remember that she too can earn [a place in] Paradise through a young scholar. Her mistress will surely not prevent her from washing his shirt or taking his bedding so it does not become bug-ridden.[19]

The domestic chores of cleaning, cooking, changing the linens of a scholar, and of laundry were rendered as religiously significant by Tiktiner in these passages. These passages are heavily gendered.[20] Tiktiner stresses that the

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16   Tiktiner R., *Meneket Rivka: A Manual of Wisdom and Piety for Jewish Women*, trans. F. von Rohden (Philadelphia: 2008) 107.

17   Tiktiner, *Meneket Rivka* 191.

18   Tiktiner, *Meneket Rivka* 192–193.

19   Tiktiner, *Meneket Rivka* 189.

20   On the importance of gender and class, see Ulbrich, *Shulamit and Margarete*; Kaplan D., "Women and Worth: Female Access to Property in Early Modern Urban Jewish Communities", *Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* 55 (2010) 93–113.

woman of the house was responsible for cleaning, while the man is mentioned in the context of scholarship.[21] Here again, we must note the deep similarities between Tiktiner's work and contemporaneous moral literature about Protestant families. In these texts, too, authors urged a gendered division of labour in which women were responsible for specific tasks in the workshop as well as in the domestic sphere. Tiktiner's text similarly encourages a woman to be supportive to her husband, to care for the children, to run a pious household in which charity, hospitality, and children's study took place, and to work. This standard in many ways mirrors what Lyndal Roper has termed the 'holy household'.[22]

Hierarchy appears as another important variable in these texts. Even among women, there is a clear gap between the mistress who supervises and the servant who works. For women of both social strata, the home was recognized by Tiktiner as a space in which daily chores took on a devotional purpose. Whether as manager or as laundress, tasks that were considered part of women's daily work could also be linked to devotion.

The connections between women, domestic tasks and religious devotion is similarly portrayed on a small silver box that was likely presented as a gift to an Italian Jewish bride by her bridegroom in the late fifteenth century. The box depicts female performance of the three 'women's commandments'. While Jewish women were obligated to observe many different commandments, three specific commandments were referred to in texts and artwork as 'women's commandments', as they were performed solely by women.[23] These included lighting candles on the Sabbath, immersing in the *mikveh* for menstrual purity, and removing a piece of dough when breaking bread. Both classic and contemporary texts prescribe that women to perform these three commandments with utmost care.[24]

The silver box depicts women performing the 'three women's commandments'. From left to right, there is a woman kindling Sabbath candles, a woman immersing in a ritual bath, and a woman separating the requisite dough from her bread [Fig. 15.5]. The blessings recited before performing these

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21   This theme is expanded on in Tiktiner, *Meneket Rivka* 186–187, in the subsection titled 'This will speak of how a woman should supervise her household staff.'

22   Roper, *Holy Household*.

23   For a scholarly overview of women's obligation to perform various commandments as well as their actual praxis, see Goldin S., *Jewish Women in the Middle Ages: A Quiet Revolution* (Manchester: 2011) 169–222; see also Baumgarten E., *Practicing Piety in Medieval Ashkenaz: Men, Women, and Everyday Religious Observance* (Philadelphia: 2014) 138–171.

24   Failure to observe these commandments was linked to dying in childbirth in classical rabbinic literature. See *Mishna* Tractate *Shabbat* 2:6. For early modern literature that deals with these three commandments, see Fram E., *My Dear Daughter: Rabbi Benjamin Slonik and the Education of Jewish Women in Sixteenth-Century Poland* (Cincinnati: 2007).

FIGURE 15.5   Bridal casket (*cofanetto*), Northern Italy (second half of the 15th century). Gift
of Astorre Mayer Collection, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, B51.04.0207
PHOTO © THE ISRAEL MUSEUM BY YORAM LEHMANN

commandments are inscribed in Hebrew above the women's heads. Although
this is a clearly religious theme, the box itself was likely used for a mundane
purpose. The lid of the box has eight knobs or dials. Judeo-Italian words for
linens, tablecloths, and sheets are inscribed next to the dials, while around
the dials one can see Hebrew letters whose value is equivalent to the numbers
one through twelve. This function suggests that the lid of the box permitted
the new wife to keep an inventory of linens.[25] The decision to decorate a wom-
an's household item with a religious theme reiterates the strong connection
between domestic life, religious devotion, and women.

Another overlap between women's household tasks and religious devotion
was the various occasions on which women brought water into their homes.
Jewish popular culture deemed it hazardous to drink water that had been left

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25   AvRutick S. (ed.), *The Jewish World 365 Days, from the Collections of the Israel Museum*
      (New York: 2004) 426–427.

out unused during particular liminal times. One such custom was called the *tekufah*, a practise that restricted using water that had been left out on four specific times throughout the year, during the winter and summer solstices and the autumnal and vernal equinox.[26] Women were to place a nail in the water, for the iron was deemed to have protective powers; otherwise, they were to ensure that the water was discarded, lest it cause serious illness or death. Similarly, it was customary not to use water that had been left out between the Sabbath and its conclusion after nightfall on Saturday night. Women who discarded that water and who drew new water for their household after the *havdalah* ceremony were deemed pious like the biblical Miriam.[27] It was also customary to avoid using water that had been left unused near a corpse.[28] In these examples, the practice of drawing water was invested with pious meaning. In these cases, it was the timing of the act that raised it from mundane to pious. In other cases, such as Tiktiner's description of cleaning, women's chores were elevated not through time, but rather through the women's intention to contribute to the scholarship of the men to whom they tended.

3   Creating Devotional Space in the Home

Tiktiner's aforementioned reference to cleaning a space 'where one prays, or religious books are, or near the *mezuzah*' confirms that the space of the home was also used for religious study and prayer.[29] There are various examples in which a certain space in early modern Jewish homes was designated as a sacred space for the inhabitants of the house. Such spaces were common in the Holy Roman Empire, where the demographic realities of the early modern period required using the home as a place for prayer. During the Middle Ages, the Jews had lived primarily in the large cities along trade routes. From the fourteenth to the seventeenth centuries, however, the Jews were largely expelled

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26   Carlebach E., *Palaces of Time: Jewish Calendar and Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge MA: 2011) 160–188. On one of the medieval traditions associated with this practice, see Baumgarten E., "'Remember that Glorious Girl': Jephthah's Daughter in Medieval Jewish Culture", *Jewish Quarterly Review* 97, 2 (2007) 180–209.

27   Shoham-Steiner E., "The Virgin Mary, Miriam, and Jewish Reactions to Marian Devotion in the High Middle Ages", *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 37, 1 (2013) 75–91.

28   See Schammes, *Customs* vol. 2, 89. Schammes relates that the neighbours of the dead would pour out all of the water that they had in their respective homes.

29   Tiktiner, *Meneket Rivka* 107.

from these urban spaces.[30] Those Jews that did not migrate elsewhere resided in the countryside, where quotas frequently limited the number of Jews in any one village or town. In Alsace, for example, during the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century, the largest village had only eleven Jewish residents, while most towns had one or two Jewish families. This meant that there was no local synagogue, no rabbi, and that local official communal spaces often did not exist.[31]

The Jews living in these towns and villages used domestic spaces in order to perform rituals that had usually been performed in communal spaces. R. Jehiel Epstein, active in Germany during the mid to late-seventeenth century, recommended that men in German towns who lacked a prayer quorum pray in a designated room. Explaining that in the home's heated main room, family members and other visitors were likely to disturb the prayer, Epstein further suggested that Jewish men cover their heads with a prayer shawl to increase concentration.[32] Similarly, Asher ha-Levi of Reichshofen, a seventeenth-century Jew, reports in his memoirs:

> The house that I built and I bought with the help of the blessed Lord [...] I built in it three items for myself. The first, a small room to set time aside for Torah [study] and for prayer, and to place in it the books that God had granted me to buy.[33]

By setting aside a particular space in his home as a space for prayer and Torah study, Asher designated that corner as sacred. The placement of books in that room allows us to wonder how that room was decorated, for although the books had a specific use, they also helped demarcate the space as devotional. Designating a section of a home as the area in which prayer was to take place mirrors the contemporaneous use of small Catholic altarpieces and other artwork designed for domestic devotion. While Jews did not use artwork or icons in their devotion, these three texts all reference various physical objects – prayer shawls, books, or *mezuzot* – as being kept or used in the

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30   Toch M., "The Formation of a Diaspora: The Settlement of Jews in the Medieval German Reich", *Aschkenas* 7 (1997) 55–78.

31   Kaplan D., *Beyond Expulsion: Jews, Christians, and Reformation Strasbourg* (Stanford: 2011) 27–48.

32   Epstein Jehiel Michael, *Kitzur shenei luhot ha-brit* (Berlin, B. Buchbinder: 1715) 68.

33   Asher ha-Levi of Reichshofen, *Die Memoiren des Ascher Levy aus Reichshofen im Elsass*, ed. M. Ginsburger (Berlin: 1913) 32. Asher also constructed a small oven and a bathhouse. That he considered these structures to be of deep significance reiterates the point, made below, that certain domestic activities were performed outside the home.

designated sacred spaces. The items had a practical or ritual function but their presence simultaneously demarcated specific areas of the home as sacred.

Tiktiner's reference to a space within the home for prayer and study is somewhat different from the descriptions of Asher and Epstein. Tiktiner's Prague did have synagogues. Yet she, too, refers to spaces within the home that were designated for devotional activities such as study and prayer. Moreover, a comparison of these three authors' references to prayer spaces in the home allows us to consider whether the use of such spaces was gendered. Epstein describes a prayer space in which men used prayer shawls to create sacred spaces. Since prayer shawls were primarily used by men, this space was inherently male.[34] Tiktiner, by contrast, refers to spaces for prayer and study that were also used by women and children. This is found in a different passage in her book, in which she explained that a woman was responsible for childcare and for children's religious upbringing. She urges:

> Therefore every upright woman should remain with her child, and should not go to the synagogue. Just as when she wants to go for a walk, or to sit in front of the door, nothing good can result. But if she sits beside the cradle, she can keep the child asleep, and also do her work. If she is privileged with more children, and they are grown up, she should sit and listen to their praying and their blessings, and not rely on the teacher […] The studying that a mother does with her child is much more successful than with someone else.[35]

Tiktiner advocated that women stay home to take care of babies, to ensure that older children were praying, studying, and making requisite blessings, and in order to 'do their work'.

The sources do not inform us as to whether the women and children who stayed home and prayed and studied did so in designated areas, such as the one Asher had, or the one Tiktiner urged women to keep clean. We similarly do not know whether the space Asher constructed was used solely by him, or whether his wife and children used that space for prayer and study as well. Yet we do see that in Jewish "holy households", women, men, and children all prayed in the home, whether in designated spaces or in *ad hoc* locations, even in cases in which there was a local synagogue.

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34   Baumgarten, *Practicing Piety* 149–166.
35   Tiktiner, *Meneket Rivka* 160–161.

4   Communal Spaces in Homes

In some early modern Jewish homes, domestic sacred spaces were not limited to that home's inhabitants, but were sometimes used by a broader range of participants. One such example is the presence of official synagogues in a domicile. This took place in several different Jewish communities throughout the world.[36] Due to the limited scope of this article, I will present only a few brief examples.

In 1563, a court case about alleged adultery recounts the presence of a synagogue situated in a home in Hagenau.[37] Elsewhere in Alsace, Jews from several different towns and villages came together on the Sabbath in one location in order to pray as a quorum. Since the small towns and villages did not have their own synagogues, these prayers typically took place in a home.[38] This was the case in Traenheim, where local residents were joined by Jews from a neighbouring town, praying on the upper floors of a house. This synagogue remained undetected until recent decades, when the current resident uncovered walls with Jewish prayers when he began renovating his home.

The presence of synagogues in homes was not limited to small villages where no official synagogue existed. In Frankfurt am Main, for example, where the Jews lived in a ghetto, there were two official synagogues. Records from the communal logbook indicate that by the eighteenth century, a number of homes in the ghetto hosted competing prayer services. The existence of these synagogues was reported in the logbooks because the community lay leaders feared that the people who attended services in these smaller domestic spaces would not contribute to the charity collection, which took place in the official synagogues. They therefore instituted set contributions that were expected of those men and women who opted not to pray in the official synagogues, but in the smaller synagogues situated in various homes.[39]

Mikvaot (sing. *mikveh*), or ritual baths, could also be situated in private homes, although they were used by a wider population. Both men and women could immerse in ritual baths, but according to Jewish law, married Jewish women were expected to immerse a number of days after menstruation in order to return to a state of menstrual purity that would allow them to resume sexual relations with their husbands. In Frankfurt's ghetto, *mikvaot* were

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36   For parallels in the Ottoman Empire, see Dotan Arad's essay in this volume.

37   Kaplan, *Beyond Expulsion* 50–58.

38   Haarscher A-M., *Les Juifs du Comté de Hanau-Lichtenberg: entre le XIVe siècle et la fin de l'Ancien Régime* (Strasbourg: 1997) 74.

39   Fram E., *A Window on their World: The Court Diaries of Rabbi Hayyim Gundersheim Frankfurt am Main, 1773–1794* (Cincinnati: 2012) 555–563.

located in the basement of several homes, and some of the archaeological remains can be seen in the *Judengasse* museum. Similarly, in Altona, two ritual baths in private homes were designated as the official spaces for immersion for the women of Altona and Wandsbeck in 1681.[40] In that year, and for four subsequent years, the leaders of the community decreed that any woman who immersed elsewhere was considered as having not immersed at all. This decree had serious religious implications, as the leaders decreed that despite immersion elsewhere, such a woman was still considered in a state of menstrual impurity, which rendered sexual relations with her husband forbidden.

The designation of a space within a home as a communal ritual bath led to the enactment of multiple regulations to govern the space. An intricate arrangement in which the women living in the two houses with *mikvaot* were appointed to oversee women's immersion was developed. As official attendants, they were tasked both with collecting fees for immersion and for ensuring that women immersed completely and properly in the ritual bath.[41] The two families in whose homes the *mikvaot* were located were compensated for their work and expenses. This underscores how work, devotion, and the home were categories that frequently overlapped. By building a communal space in a home, the home's residents performed an official communal duty – one they likely experienced as religiously significant – though they were compensated for this work. Local women were to pay a fixed fee for immersing, the proceeds of which were divided between the community and the head of household at a pre-determined rate. These homes, therefore, generated revenue for the community and for the heads of household. As the only officially-sanctioned ritual baths, these spaces served as communal institutions despite their location in private homes.[42]

5 Defining the Domestic Sphere

The considerable overlap between home and communal spaces does not allow for a simple treatment of domestic devotion, for homes could include a communal institution. The inverse was also true in that domestic tasks were sometimes performed outside of the home. To illustrate this point, I will return to

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40 Kaplan D., "'To Immerse their Wives': Communal Identity and the 'Kahalishe' Mikveh of Altona", *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 36, 2 (2012) 257–279.

41 In the Middle Ages, though a woman immersed in the company of another woman, there was no formal attendant. See Kaplan, "To Immerse" 260.

42 See Kaplan, "To Immerse" 268–269, on changes that revoked the status of these ritual baths in 1685.

the three aforementioned 'women's commandments'. All three of these commandments revolve around what may be considered domestic activities: lighting candles in the home, baking, and resuming sexual relations. Nevertheless, their domestic nature did not mean that they were performed in the space of the home. While, as we have seen, candle lighting took place in the home, women immersed in a communal ritual bath that could be situated either in or outside of a home. Certainly, most women immersed outside of their own homes.[43] As was mentioned above, the early modern period witnessed the establishment of official communal ritual baths. In 1597 in Padua, for example, the communal leaders decreed that women were to immerse in the official ritual bath, under penalty of a fine.[44] Moreover, as in the somewhat later aforementioned case in Altona, the lay leaders in Padua ruled that any woman who immersed elsewhere would be considered as if she had not immersed; all sexual relations with her husband thereafter would be deemed forbidden. However, in 1613, a case was brought before the community's leaders. The wife of Rabbi Judah Napoli, who is unnamed in the text, was loath to immerse in the communal *mikveh* due to a feud between her family and that of the official attendant who governed the *mikveh.* The lay leaders made an exception for this woman, and allowed her to immerse elsewhere.[45] This anecdote highlights that immersion was far from private. First, immersion was regulated by male communal leaders. Moreover, although immersion was a female activity that revolved around sexual intimacy and marriage, it was performed in a space that was neither private nor public. Immersion was a domestic devotion performed outside of the home. Women's experiences during immersion were shaped both by the location of the ritual bath and by the specific people who were present in that space, such as the attendant.

Baking bread, another domestic task, was also not necessarily performed in the home, since not every home had an oven. In medieval communities, when bread was not baked at home, it was baked either in a communal oven or in a Christian bakery.[46] Various controversies that respectively arose in Frankfurt am Main, Mainz, and Worms during the eighteenth century document that in

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43   Medieval Worms and Speyer had communal bathhouses, still visible today. By the early modern period, many communities required that women immerse in the communal *mikveh*. See Kaplan, "To Immerse" 272–273.

44   *Minutes Book of the Council of the Jewish Community of Padua 1577–1603*, ed. D. Carpi (Jerusalem: 1973) 348.

45   *Minutes Book* 158–159.

46   Strauss D.L., *Pat 'Akum in Medieval France and Germany*, M.A. thesis (Yeshiva University: 1979).

early modern times, Jews often bought bread from Christian bakers.[47] Although the task of baking was typically defined domestic, it was often practised by men and women outside the home.

Early modern domestic devotion was a fluid category that took on several forms. Certain rituals were designed to be performed at home. Domestic chores, and other work that was performed in the home could take on religious meaning, particularly for women. Sections of one's home could be transformed into a space for religious activity, whether for its inhabitants or for the wider community. In those homes in which communal spaces were situated, residents often laboured in the official communal space in their homes, such that their actions were simultaneously domestic, devotional, and work-related. Some domestic tasks, including those with ritual aspects, were performed outside the home. This complex interplay between spaces, work, domestic life, family, and religion, which was common among both Jews and Christians, reflects the multiple functions of the early modern home and the centrality of religious expression to early modern daily life.

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47   On Frankfurt, see Schudt Jacob Johann, *Jüdische Merckwürdigkeiten* (Frankfurt, S.T. Hocker: 1714) vol. 1, 68; on Mainz, see Litt S., "Rabbinic Authority and Community in 18th Century Germany: Moses Brandeis Levi and the Jewish Community of Mainz", http://wesscholar.wesleyan.edu/emw/emw2010/emw2010/7/. On Worms, see Stadtarchiv Worms, 1B 2034.

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Birth, Death and Reincarnation in the Life of a Fifteenth-Century Tibetan Princess

Hildegard Diemberger

1   Introduction[1]

Like early modern Europe, the Tibetan Buddhist world was historically shaped by a multitude of religious experiences – most of which went unrecorded. Temples and monasteries, manuscripts and prints, as well as beautiful figurative art are the tangible vestiges of a world in which Buddhism provided the dominant framework to think about human life and the world. The focus of these endeavours lay ultimately in the achievement of universal liberation from Samsara, the cycle of rebirths and the suffering of existence, as well as in more mundane and short-term objectives: guaranteeing long life and prosperity, contributing to a good reincarnation for a deceased relative, obtaining protection against illness and misfortunes.

Most of the day-to-day devotional practices only made it into recorded narratives and images as marginal details within works that were dedicated to Buddhist deities, rulers and spiritual masters – with biographical literature providing a particularly popular genre in this respect. Tibetan biographies (Tib. *rnam thar*) show many parallels with medieval European hagiographies in that they provide narratives of exemplary lives, where 'memorabilia' and 'mirabilia' merge in ways that are highly effective but difficult to disentangle.[2] Relying on the *life* of the Buddha as a paradigm, they focus invariably on the life of someone who abandoned worldly existence either as a monk/nun or as an ascetic. Structured according to predictable patterns and interspersed with well-known narrative tropes, the narrative can nevertheless be rich in detail that makes the story credible and usually straddles the lay and the monastic worlds. Life stories, often produced in hindsight by assembling notes and oral accounts of direct witnesses, were told according to literary models that

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1   This article is based on research carried out in the framework of two projects supported by the Arts and Humanities Research Council UK (RG42232; RG 55631).

2   See Tambiah S.J., *The Buddhist Saints of the Forest and the Cult of Amulets: A Study in Charisma, Hagiography, Sectarianism, and Millennial Buddhism* (Cambridge: 1984).

privileged the soteriological endeavour over any other concern (these could highlight monastic and scholarly achievement or transgressive life experiences according to the tradition of the 'mad' ascetic). Since lives were also lived and understood by the subject according to earlier exemplary referents it is often difficult to disentangle the layers that led to the creation of a *rnam thar*. It is the less glamorous, less predictable and more contingent detail that is often the richest source of historical insight. Especially biographies written close to the events can provide a glimpse of real life experiences and wider social and cultural contexts (particularly if read against the grain and with reference to other sources). As in early modern Europe, religion and politics in Tibet were dominated by men, notwithstanding the examples of some women (usually belonging to the royalty or the aristocracy) who played crucial roles in a variety of contexts. It is therefore not surprising that most of the available biographies are dedicated to male spiritual masters and that those that focus on female ones are few and far between. Recent research, however, has brought to light some important works that reveal the lives of extraordinary women from different historical periods[3] and in some cases provide information about their networks which included many more ordinary women of their time.[4] In most cases accounts of ordinary and extraordinary domestic devotions are an important prelude to the spiritual choices that led to a woman's abandonment of worldly life. It is precisely the richness in ordinary detail that grounds the narrative in recognizable human experience and anchors it to specific places and times.

The biography of Chokyi Dronma (1422–1455) is a fifteenth-century account of a Tibetan princess who abandoned royal life to become a nun, was eventually recognized as the emanation of a female deity and established a female reincarnation line that has lasted up to the present day [Fig 16.1]. From this narrative she emerges as a great patron of printing and manuscript production, Buddhist art and engineering work for the benefit of all living beings, recalling in many ways some of the great European Renaissance women. Some of the passages of this biography, especially those that concern her early life as a princess, married to a neighbouring ruler according to the political strategies

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3 See for example Schaeffer K., *Himalayan Hermitess: The Life of a Tibetan Buddhist Nun* (Oxford – New York: 2004); Diemberger H., *When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty: The Samding Dorje Phagmo of Tibet* (New York: 2007); Jacoby S., *Love and Liberation: Autobiographical Writings of the Tibetan Buddhist Visionary Sera Khandro* (New York: 2014).

4 For example I identified a wide range of women within networks that supported the production of Tibetan print editions in the fifteenth century. Diemberger H., "Tibetan Women as Patrons of Printing and Innovation", in Diemberger H. – Ehrhard F.-K. – Kornicki P. (eds.), *Tibetan Printing: Comparisons, Continuities and Change* (Leiden: 2016) 267–308.

FIGURE 16.1   Manuscript of the biography of Chokyi Dronma (15th century). *Ye shes mkha'*
'gro bsod nams 'dren gyi sku skyes gsum pa rje btsun ma chos kyi sgron ma'i
rnam thar. 144 folios. Incomplete manuscript
PHOTO TAKEN BY PASANG WANGDU

of her father, give insight into the world in which she lived and eventually
fought her battle to pursue her spiritual aspirations. In this paper I focus on
these passages as they cast light on Chokyi Dronma's worldly experiences and
on the way in which lay devotion provided the basis for the more radical spiri-
tual pathway that she chose to follow later in her life. As a child of an unlucky
queen, who produced only daughters and had to endure the competition of
a junior royal consort mother of the male heir to the throne, Chokyi Dronma
sought refuge in spirituality to negotiate a difficult position in a world of politi-
cal marriages and dynastic disputes. This was the world she sought to abandon
but with which she engaged throughout her life: as a pawn first, as an idiosyn-
cratic religious leader later [Fig. 16.2].

2   The Biography of Chokyi Dronma Within Tibetan Biographical
Tradition

The manuscript of the biography of Chokyi Dronma is a unique source, the
original of which is currently preserved in the Tibet Museum of Lhasa.[5] It is
incomplete and therefore its dating and authorship had to be reconstructed

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5   This manuscript (Tibet Museum nr. 4281) was deposited there after having been kept at the
     Palace of Nationalities in Beijing where it had arrived from the library of Drepung monastery

on the basis of internal evidence and other sources such as the *Bo dong chos 'byung* (*The History of Bodong*) and the *Biography of Thangtong Gyalpo*.[6] It was written by a male disciple of the princess, who was born in the same region and followed her during her peripatetic life until her final journey to the holy site of Tsari in south-eastern Tibet, where she died aged 33. Predictable Tibetan Buddhist tropes clearly inform the narrative; however, there is much detail that reflects the biographer's first-hand experience of the events and his familiarity with people and places. From this point of view it is quite an exceptional work, as Tibetan biographies tend to be rather formulaic. It is also the oldest known Tibetan biography of a female spiritual master and became fairly influential before being intentionally or unintentionally withdrawn from circulation (presumably in the seventeenth century) and eventually being deposited in Drepung Monastery in Lhasa.

3   Glimpses into the Domestic Life of a Fifteenth-Century Princess

Chokyi Dronma was born in 1422 as the first child of the Tibetan king Thri Lhawang Gyaltshen (1404–1464) and queen Dode Gyalmo, who ruled over the region of Mangyul Gungthang in south-western Tibet.[7] At that time Tibet was nominally under the loose rule of the Rinpungpa but was basically fragmented in a multitude of regional powers, involved in conflicts and alliances that were often supported by marriage alliances among the local elites. At the time of Chokyi Dronma's birth the kingdom of Mangyul Gungtang desperately needed an heir. The fact that she was a girl and that her next sibling was also a girl,

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in Lhasa. So far it is unpublished, there are a few photocopies in circulation and it is going to be made available in a trilingual book edition (Tibetan, English, Chinese), which I am preparing with Tibetan colleagues. I was kindly given a photocopy by Leonard Van der Kuijp, Head of Sanskrit and Tibetan Studies at Harvard University, when I published an English translation in the monograph Diemberger, *When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty*.

6   The biography of Thangtong Gyalpo is a life narrative of one of the masters with whom Chokyi Dronma interacted and was written in 1607 on the basis of pre-existing sources, including a version of the biography of Chokyi Dronma. The *Bo dong Chos 'byung* is a history of the religious tradition to which Chokyi Dronma belonged and was written in the early seventeenth century. Both sources offer important information on what happened at the very end of Chokyi Dronma's life and the people who were closest to her. For a full discussion of the final part of Chokyi Dronma's life as well as the dating and authorship of her biography, see Diemberger, *When a Woman Becomes a Religious Dynasty*.

7   For a detailed discussion of the history of this region, see Everding K.H., *Das Königreich Mang yul Gung thang,* vols. 1 and 2 (Bonn: 2000). It was located on the Tibetan plateau north of Kathmandu and included the oldest and most important traditional trade route that connected Kathmandu to Lhasa.

may have had an impact on the way she was treated in her early childhood as female rulers were rare but not unheard of in the history of her kingdom (this situation would change radically with the birth of her brother, see below).

Predictably the biography describes the young girl as very precocious in her dedication to spiritual aspirations. According to her biography Chokyi Dronma learnt to read and write from her mother:

> At the age of four she started to be taught how to read by her mother by looking at a model of letters (*ka dpe*). As she started to read the first letter *ka*, she was able to continue reading the *kha ga* spontaneously without any instruction. She thus became able to read and write perfectly.
>
> *Biography of Chokyi Dronma*, fol. 5v

The description of the way in which she learnt the Tibetan alphabet is an interesting detail as it is relatively specific and plausible in its practicality, and seems to point to the fact that some women (at least those belonging to the higher levels of society) were literate. Chokyi Dronma's own commitment to the spread of literacy, especially among women, is reflected in a later passage in her biography, which highlights the fact that she taught nuns to read. This is also corroborated by her dedication to supporting the editing and printing of texts.[8]

Access to scriptures marked her religious life in multiple ways. They provided not only the basis for the rituals that she used to recite as daily practice when she was still leading a secular life (the biography describes them in some detail); they also provided a source of inspiration for some of her decisions. For example, the biography states that reading the *Lalitavistara*, which tells the story of the Buddha, influenced her decision to abandon worldly existence.

4   Domestic Devotions and Marriage Politics

The biography often reveals the tensions that Chokyi Dronma experienced throughout her life: she had to choose between fulfilling the mundane expectations of being a good princess and the spiritual aspirations that drew her towards abandoning worldly existence. A telling passage refers to the moment in which her mother came to know that the king had taken another queen and produced the expected male heir to the throne:

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8   See Diemberger, "Tibetan Women as Patrons of Printing and Innovation" 267–308.

While [Chokyi Dronma] was staying at Gonpashag,[9] a junior wife of the king, one of the sisters from Bongdzog,[10] gave birth to a son, [her brother] Canneba [alias Thri Namgyal De], fulfilling local aspirations. Reacting to her anxiety of having had only two daughters, [Chokyi Dronma's mother] spoke bitterly to the Venerable [Chokyi Dronma] and her sister calling them 'two female misfortunes'. The precious Lady of Prosperity [Chokyi Dronma] said: "Mother! Please come here! Let us make a plan for all of us; mother and daughters". Her mother was surprised and asked: "Please tell me what you think?" She told her mother: "Although since I was a little girl I have wished to become a renunciate, in the first part of my life I will become a married woman because of the *karma* accumulated previously [...]. Anyway in the first part of my life I will lead a secular life fulfilling your expectations, as my mother. In the later part of my life I will take the vows and will fulfil my hope regarding my future existence. But, please, do not call us 'misfortunes', I am an excellent one!" The mother was greatly surprised and pleased with this, and faith was spontaneously awakened in her.

> *Biography of Chokyi Dronma*, fols. 7v–8r

Chokyi Dronma's destiny of being sent as a bride to a neighbouring kingdom became real when her father received a marriage proposal from the ruler of southern Lato [Fig. 16.3], a kingdom immediately to the East of Mangyul Gungthang:

The king received a request [for his daughter] to marry Tshewang Tashi, the son of Situ Lhatsen Kyab, the ruler of Southern Lato.[11] Her father accepted this request thinking that this would benefit everyone and ordered the venerable lady [that she should go to Southern Lato as a bride]. [When she heard this] she said to her father: "I do not want to contradict my father's order this time. However, having now accepted to go for the sake of the living beings, later, when the right time comes, should not

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9   This is a reference to a place south of the capital where Chokyi Dronma spent some of her childhood with her mother.

10 The name Bongdzog is both a place and a clan name referring to people inhabiting the Rasuwa Valley in Nepal. This points to a marriage alliance between Chokyi Dronma's father and the neighbouring polity to the south (see Diemberger, "Tibetan Women as Patrons of Printing and Innovation" 295).

11 Situ Lhatsen Kyab was a ruler of southern Lato, the region immediately north of Mt Everest, in the fifteenth century. His father Situ Chokyi Rinchen (died 1402) established the capital in Shekar and was celebrated in the local history *Shel dkar chos 'byung*. See Wangdu P. – Diemberger H., *Shel dkar chos 'byung, History of the White Crystal* (Vienna: 1996).

FIGURE 16.3   Ruins of the Shekar fortress where Chokyi Dronma lived for a few years as the daughter-in-law of the local ruler before becoming a nun
PHOTO TAKEN BY THE AUTHOR

I take the monastic vows?" Laying her hand on the statue of Gurkyi Gonpo (Panjaranath)[12] [and thus calling on him as a witness] she took an oath to this effect.

Biography of Chokyi Dronma, fols. 10v–11r

When the time of the marriage came she behaved like a Tibetan bride; during the ceremony she received gifts and shed tears before departing for her new home. The biography describes the event in great detail, combining extraordinary epithets and descriptions with much more ordinary features of Tibetan marriage rituals as they are still practised in Tibetan areas today. According to the narrative (which was clearly written in hindsight) the princess as a daughter-in-law was trying to comply with the required protocol whilst anticipating the fact that she was going to abandon worldly life at a later stage:

[Chokyi Dronma], thought: "I came here with two tasks: one of this world and one beyond the world. For the sake of my ancestors I have avoided sins and accomplished virtuous deeds. In particular, I have paid respect

12   Protector of the Sakya tradition, see de Nebesky-Wojkowitz R., *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities* (The Hague: 1956) 49–51.

and provided service to the Buddha's doctrine. I have taken good care of our subjects and servants. However, I cannot stay long in this family. If I were to stay, I would be committed to showing respect to my parents-in-law and in particular to my master of the house [i.e. husband] as if they were gods and provide them with good service forever. Therefore, when the appropriate moment comes I will enter the door of the precious doctrine and practice Buddha's teachings in the most appropriate way.

Biography of Chokyi Dronma, fols. 18v–19r

The biography also highlights that whilst leading the worldly life of a Tibetan royal daughter-in-law she was already practising a lot of domestic devotions that echoed those practised in monasteries:

At Shekar she kept practising her daily and nightly routine: after waking up she would meditate on the entire *Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (*Lam rim*), then she would recite her confession (*Byang chub rtung bshags*) one time. Then, from getting up until the *Ritual for complete spiritual liberation* (*Cho ga rnam grol*), she would wash to refresh her body and perform spiritual purification (*gso sbyong*). She also used to perform the *Realisation of all gods* (*Lha du ma'i mngon par rtogs pa*). She would then celebrate the *Stages of the White Torma Offering* (*dKar gtor gyi rim pa*), the *Praise of the Buddha referring to his twelve deeds* (*bsTon pa'i bstod pa mdzad pa bcu gnyis*), the praise *King of the Dharma* (*bsTod pa chos kyi rgyal po*) by the venerable Sakya Pandita and the *Ritual offering to Tara* (*sGrol mchod*). At that time, before getting the teachings from the Omniscient [Bodong Chogle Namgyal, who would become her main spiritual master], she used to rely mainly on the texts by the great Sakyapa, spiritual father and son [i.e. Sakya Pandita and Phagpa].[13]

Biography of Chokyi Dronma, fols. 19v–20r

Portrayed as a champion of Buddhism, she reportedly took every opportunity to promote it in a setting in which pre-Buddhist practices were still favoured by some people, including her husband. The description of her daily routine is a blend of ordinary and extraordinary detail, revealing the fact that she was at the same time a regular royal daughter-in-law and an extraordinary spiritual woman:

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13   Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen (1182–1251) and Phagpa (1235–1280) were famous spiritual masters of the Sakya tradition, which was widely practised in the region.

After breakfast, at the time of the regular [lunch] snack, following the wish of her husband she would play *migmang*[14] putting garlands of jewels as bets. Initially she agreed to this many times; later she asked to stop playing *migmang* but her husband insisted a few times. She then said: "In this case, what is the point of making such ordinary bets? Like in the case of Sakya Pandita's debate with the heretics (*mu stegs*),[15] let us put Buddha's religion and Shenrab's religion [i.e. Bonpo religion] as the bet in a game of *migmang*". Because of the power of *karma*, what was in her mind did not happen. She was just told "We can play later". After dinner she enjoyed talking to some spiritual masters and some new people who had arrived to meet her. She would comment on what they were saying and in doing so she used to impress and delight them. Before performing ritual offerings of *chang* and tea, she would read the songs and poems of former lamas to avert the demons. She also used to perform some of the [above mentioned] rituals again. She used to go to bed at a regular time. When she was together with other people, her way of behaving and speaking was always extraordinary. Therefore common people used to gossip, saying that they felt as though they were in a monastery. With her behaviour she used to eclipse the others. However, the people close to the great lady, such as her father- and mother-in-law, her husband and their retinue, considered her behaviour as that of a new bride. She had a very clear understanding of the rights and wrongs of any action and behaved far beyond anyone's expectations so that nobody would challenge her.

> *Biography of Chokyi Dronma*, fols. 20r–v

The biography also highlights that in addition to her daily practices in the domestic environment, she was trying to participate in the activities that were taking place in the main monastery. However, as a laywoman she was able to do so only from the margins:

During the summer and winter celebrations she did not join the centre of the gathering[16] to avoid interfering, she just used to reach the door of the garden (*kun dga' ra ba*) where these were performed. She then used to pray for the monastic community and prostrate herself before them.

> *Biography of Chokyi Dronma*, fol. 20v

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14 *Migmang* (*mig mangs*) is a Tibetan table game, which is reminiscent of chess and similar games.

15 This is a reference to a famous debate that took place in Mangyul Kyirong in which Sakya Pandita defeated a Saivaite master and thereby defended Buddhism.

16 *Dbyar chos dgun chos* were the most important religious events in the ritual calendar of the Shekar monastery, see *Shel dkar chos 'byung*, fol. 42v.

The lifestyle described in the biography is of course highly hagiographic. However, the precision and the detail of the daily routine suggests that she was probably actually leading a very devout life in which ritual activities marked the pace of life. The recitation of prayer, the reading of scriptures and purification practices were central to these activities and present many parallels with popular Christian devotion. Food, in terms of offerings as well as fasting practices, was (and still is) important in popular Buddhist religiosity, as it used to be for medieval European women.[17] Chokyi Dronma later in her life became a master of ritual practices (*bcud len*) that enabled her to draw sustenance from the environment without needing food. Her highly spiritual attitude to life provided her with a source of strength when negotiating her position of daughter-in-law in the new setting. It is within this very religious framework that she experienced some of the key events in the life of a young woman, including childbirth.

5 Childbirth: Expectations and Management

The biography states that at the age of eighteen, i.e. in 1440, Chokyi Dronma became pregnant. At that time she was very well looked after:

> When she was nineteen [i.e. eighteen according to western reckoning] she became pregnant. The Great Situ, the queen and the prince took very good care of her, treating her like the apple of their eyes. They had religious services performed regularly for her and had the whole retinue thinking only about her. When the time for the delivery came, as the sun was rising, she gave birth, without any harm, to a perfect daughter. Tsencham [the mother-in-law] came and asked: "Did you have a good delivery? Did you suffer any pain?" The glorious woman [i.e. Chokyi Dronma] answered: "The birth was easy and I did not face any hardship; the baby is a girl." Tsencham said: "The most important thing is that your body is in good condition. There is no difference between boy and girl. The marriage relation with the Changpa [i.e. the rulers of the neighbouring kingdom to the north][18] is continuing. Later you will give birth to one child after the other." She spoke in this way to please her.

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17   See Bynum C., *Holy Fasts and Holy Feasts: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley – London: 1992).

18   The family of the rulers of Northern Lato to which Tsencham belonged. This is a reference to the fact that the ruling families of Northern and Southern Lato had regular marriage alliances and the birth of a daughter was precious for this.

Biography of Chokyi Dronma, fols. 26r–v

Despite the hagiographical framework, the narrative is candid in reporting that the words of the mother-in-law were spoken to please Chokyi Dronma, countering the predictable disappointment with the gender of the child with observations about the good physical condition of the princess and commenting on the fact that daughters were an asset in marriage alliances. After her mother-in-law Chokyi Dronma was visited by her husband, with whom she had a difficult relationship:

> Then Tshewang Tashi came to see her. Tsencham went into a small inner room [and left them alone]. The master of her house [i.e. her husband] asked several times: "Did you face any hardship?" The [princess'] emanation body rejoicing in the dance of illusion answered: "I did not encounter any suffering. This time, even if there had been some suffering, I could have endured it easily. However, I cannot stand the suffering of being caught in Samsara. The pleasure of emotional attachment is very short; it does not bring any long-term benefit. Permanent happiness should be aimed for." Tshewang Tashi was speechless. Later he suggested that Yungdrung Lingpa, a great Bonpo master, should become the child's teacher. The Lady of Prosperity replied: "Had this child been a boy, you would have had the power to decide. The child being a girl, according to dowry agreements (*nor la 'dum 'dug pas*),[19] she will take refuge in the Jewel of Buddhism." The parents took affectionate care of their newborn child. Nannies provided food, milk and play. The monks of Gyade monastery performed religious services and court attendants further fostered her growth in another auspicious room.
>
> *Biography of Chokyi Dronma*, fols. 26r–27r

This passage reveals a tension around the control over the religious upbringing of the daughter, suggesting that the husband would have preferred her to follow the Bonpo religion to which he was committed. However, Chokyi Dronma claimed the right to make the decision in relation to her female offspring, revealing elements of bilineality in the kinship system. The disputes around different religious affiliations among members of the same ruling family betray a rather complex and divided setting even if Buddhism was already clearly dominant. According to the biography the baby princess was well looked after. She belonged to the elite and was an asset in marriage alliances. However, a

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19   This is a reference to marriage arrangements and the transmission of certain goods and rights in the female line.

different passage betrays the fact that infanticide of baby girls was not unheard of and this was an extreme manifestation of a wider set of attitudes towards women that Chokyi Dronma consciously opposed after becoming a highly influential nun:

> When the Female Buddha Woman of Wisdom [i.e. Chokyi Dronma], was about to arrive at Shekar from the palace of her father as a bride, the mother of a dumb boy gave birth to four daughters at once, in a locality in the southern region. The father was furious about this and tried to throw the girls into the water. However, the dumb boy all of a sudden spoke: "They cannot be thrown away! The four girls are four *dakinis*. The head of the *dakinis*, Konchog Gyalmo [i.e. Chokyi Dronma] is about to come here from Ngari!" Later these girls became extraordinary beings as it was predicted.
>
> *Biography of Chokyi Dronma*, fols. 33v–34r

Not long after the birth of her daughter, Chokyi Dronma went to the hot springs where she fell gravely ill and almost died. When she came back she did not seem to want to look after her daughter. A rather obscure passage states that when she came back:

> She saw her child but hardly did anything to provide for her. Tsencham Gyalmo was extremely upset about this and said to [her husband] the Great Situ: "She has not been looking after her child! Even wolves or hawks care for their offspring." When Vajrayogini [Chokyi Dronma] heard what her mother-in-law had said she commented: "Royal offspring have an innate nature. A good mother is also necessary and up to now I have done all that I could do to look after this child. However, from now on it is not necessary for me to do so. It is not worth yearning for the sources of suffering." Her irritated mother-in-law said: "She might be a Buddhist. However, her behaviour seems very worldly. When she is hurt by something, even if her mind is affected just a little, she never forgives and she will take revenge ruthlessly. She is a cold-hearted person indeed. Who is like that? It is difficult to assess her." The Great Situ smiled and said: "Who dares to assess her? Currently nobody is superior to Konchog Gyalmo in Central Tibet. Where is someone similar? Where else is such a daughter-in-law?"
>
> *Biography of Chokyi Dronma*, fols. 29r–30r

The narrative of Chokyi Dronma's detachment from her daughter may be inspired by the story of the Buddha who abandoned his wife and child to pursue enlightenment; this resonance is also highlighted by the author's choice of mentioning her as Vajrayogini, the epithet of a Buddhist female deity.[20] However, this episode may also betray a range of other tensions around her motherhood, and the reported dialogues in which she is mentioned with her secular name, Konchog Gyalmo, are rather obscure and read like fragments of dialogues that took place in a conflictual situation. Not long afterwards she left for her homeland to mediate a conflict between her father and her brother who often clashed because of the ambition and rough character of the young prince and because of the fact that they were supported by different constituencies in their kingdoms. At that time Chokyi Dronma left her daughter behind, in the care of her in-laws and the court.

6   Grieving the Loss of a Child

The biography describes how on her way back from her visit to her homeland where she mediated the conflict successfully, she felt that things were not quite right at Shekar:

> While traveling towards the capital, she became increasingly anxious that her daughter might not be there any longer [and that she may have died] while she was in Ngari [i.e. Mangyul Gungthang, her homeland]. At first Tsencham and the prince did not have the courage to tell her [the sad news] and thus the Great Situ himself sent a letter: "You came here fruitfully, but we were not as fruitful as you were. As nothing else could be done, we tried to earn merits by carrying out her funeral in the best possible way." The Great Yogini thought that her daughter had died because her husband had requested some Bonpo priests to take care of her and wrote a reply saying: "It is the fate of any being that was born to die. There is no point in worrying about this. However, the child should really have lived longer, but because of the actions against Buddhism this did not happen. Now there is no point in worrying, this child will find her own way." The Great Situ was glad and relieved at this reply and showed it to

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20   For a detailed discussion of this deity, see English E., *Vajrayoginī: Her Visualizations, Rituals and Forms* (Boston: 2002).

everybody. The people of his court said: "Perhaps this time [Konchog] Gyalmo [i.e. Chokyi Dronma] has some regret for how things have gone. Later she may be blessed by the birth of another child; this Lady Source of Prosperity will achieve a successful birth for the ruler and his son."

Biography of Chokyi Dronma, fols. 31v–32r

Certainly the religious framework provided Chokyi Dronma with a way of coping with the loss of her child. Trying to see through the hagiographical narrative, a reader can perceive a sort of blame game that must have surrounded the premature death of the baby princess. This is also highlighted by the fact that the reported passages of direct speech refer to Chokyi Dronma with her secular name, Konchog Gyalmo – the name that would have been commonly used for her at the time. Was it Chokyi Dronma who did not care properly for her daughter and left for her homeland? Or was it the paternal family of the child that did not look after the baby as they should have? How much regret surrounded the event? The reference to the child's reincarnation and the anticipation that the princess would give birth to more children were both common ways of putting things to rest (as I have often seen happening now among Tibetan rural communities).

No children would follow, though. Not long after the death of her daughter, Chokyi Dronma decided to give up secular life for good and embrace the spiritual pathway of a nun. Did the death of her daughter play a part in this? The biography emphasizes the fact that Chokyi Dronma had already made up her mind from an early age and that she would dedicate herself completely to a spiritual life as soon as this would become possible. However, many of the descriptions of life events seem to betray a much more contingent nature of her trajectory and the likelihood that the narrative was describing things in hindsight, projecting later views onto her past.

7   Leaving Worldly Life: a Difficult yet Possible Option

The struggle to leave worldly life and become a nun was far from easy. Chokyi Dronma had to assert herself against both her family of origin and the family she had married into.[21] Despite it being suggested that she should fulfil her

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21   This is a recurring feature in the life of Buddhist female spiritual masters and has many parallels in Christian hagiographical tradition: see for example Saint Clare of Assisi; see Bartoli M., *Saint Clare: Beyond the Legend* (Los Angeles: 2010) and, for later examples, see Davis N.Z., *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1997). Like Clare of Assisi, Chokyi Dronma became a referent for later women who followed her example of withdrawal from worldly life and fulfilment through support of

spiritual aspirations by acting as a patron of Buddhist deeds (an easier and less controversial route), she did not accept compromises. The biography gives a detailed description of her lengthy struggle, which was the source of a lot of anxiety for the people around her and even a war between the two neighbouring kingdoms. This includes powerful descriptions of scenes in which hair, as a well-known Buddhist personal symbol[22] with many resonances in the Christian context, plays an important part: she challenges her family by publicly tearing her hair out and offers her hair in the monastic initiation ceremony.

Eventually she left her royal residence and reached Bodong Chogle Namgyal, her spiritual master, in the Porong Pemo Choding monastery where she became a novice and after a while a fully ordained nun. She became one of the very rare instances of a Tibetan woman having obtained full ordination, something which is currently a hotly debated topic in Buddhist circles.[23] Later in her life Chokyi Dronma was recognized as the emanation of the Buddhist deity Vajravarahi (a form of the female Buddhist deity Vajrayogini), establishing a female reincarnation line that lasts up to the present day. Her twelfth re-embodiment is currently the head of Samding monastery in Southern Tibet.

8   Conclusion

The biography of Chokyi Dronma offers a rare glimpse into the life of a princess in fifteenth-century Tibet. Her case, like that of other less prominent female Buddhist practitioners, suggests that religion could play an important part in a woman's life despite the scanty documentation that attests to this. Domestic devotions were among the lay religious practices that offered a powerful framework within which a woman could deal with the wide range of challenges that shaped her life as daughter, daughter-in-law, mother and grandmother. At the same time the link between lay devotion and monastic life offered, through the practice of patronage, a socially sanctioned way for women to be actively involved in wider spiritual endeavours.[24] The latter also offered

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spiritual deeds; see Diemberger, "Women and Patrons of Printing and Innovation" 267–308.

22   See Obeyesekere G., *Medusa's Hair* (Chicago: 1981) for a compelling discussion of hair as personal symbols in Buddhism.

23   Mohr T. – Tsedroen J. (eds.), *Dignity and Discipline: Reviving Full Ordination for Buddhist Nuns* (Boston: 2010); Lekshe Tsomo K. (ed.), *Buddhist Women and Social Justice* (Albany: 2004).

24   See Willis J., "Nuns and Benefactresses: The Role of Women and Philosophic Innovation in the Development of Buddhism." In Haddad Y. – Findly E. (eds.), *Women, Religion, and Social Change* (Albany: 1985).

a route that some women embraced in a more radical way to take refuge from worldly concerns – especially the destiny of being a pawn in wider marriage strategies – and aspire to spiritual liberation. In doing so they were relying on what Alan Sponberg defined as 'soteriological inclusiveness',[25] which contrasted with more misogynous and androcentric attitudes in Buddhism. It is not surprising that Chokyi Dronma (and her reincarnations) became the protectress of women who refuse marriage.[26] The biography of Chokyi Dronma shows that women's participation in religious life, both in domestic and public settings, was significant, albeit often neglected. She emerges from the narrative as part of a wider spiritual network that connected lay and monastic worlds, within which women played an important albeit unrecognized part. In some ways she recalls the Renaissance women who asserted themselves in a male-dominated religious and political world, often experiencing challenging lives and contributing to great achievements.

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25   Discussing early Buddhist sources Alan Sponberg highlights their inconsistency in relationship to gender, which he describes as 'multivocality'. 'Soteriological inclusiveness' can be found alongside 'institutional androcentrism', 'ascetic mysoginism' and 'soteriological androgyny' . See Sponberg A., "Attitudes Towards Women and the Feminine in Early Buddhism." In Cabezon J.I. (ed.), *Buddhism, Sexuality and Gender* (Delhi: 1992) 3–36.

26   See Dhondup K. – Tsering T., "Samdhing Dorjee Phagmo: Tibet's only Female Reincarnation Line", *Tibetan Review* (1979) (August): 11–17.

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